merican Artists' Congress—Town Hall—Friday Night.

FEBRUARY 18, 1936 15c

New Masses

Pekin's General Strike

CARL HAESSLER

The Army Finds an Angel

SEYMOUR WALDMAN

In the Polish Cemetery

JOHN L. SPIVAK

A Cable Dispatch from London

JOHN STRACHEY

Papa Partisan, Mother Anvil

MICHAEL GOLD

Elmer Rice Answers John J. Raskob

ROBERT FORSYTHE REVIEWS CHARLIE CHAPLIN

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New Masses $1,500 CONTEST

(The cartoons on this page are the only ones in the contest. No additional ones will be printed, so you can enter the contest now.)

—RULES—

1. Anyone (except employees of the New Masses or their families) is eligible to enter this title contest.

2. The contest opened January 23. Titles must be received at the New Masses Contest Dept., Box 76, Madison Square Station, New York, N. Y., on or before April 15, 1936. Awards will be made as soon after the end of the contest as the titles can be considered by the judges.

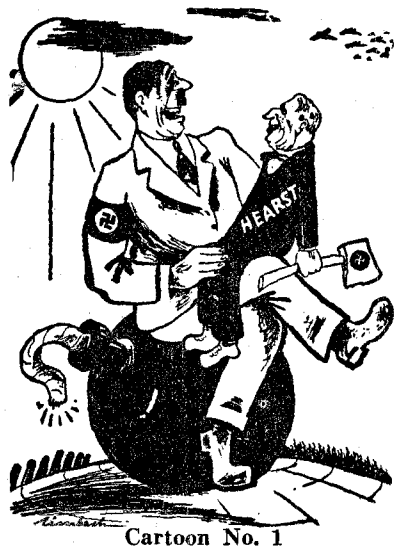
3. You need not use the attached coupon, although it is most convenient, but in order to be eligible in the Title Contest, your subscription for 10 weeks for the New Masses with $1, the subscription price, must accompany the titles you submit.

4. In case of a tie of two or more, then the judges will ask for a competitive twenty-five-word descriptive essay on the three cartoons. Their decision on the essays will be final.

5. All contest entries will be acknowledged as received.

6. The title winners, by acceptance of the prizes, unconditionaly transfer to the New Masses all rights to the winning titles.

7. The judges will award the prizes on the basis of the best set of titles submitted. Their decision will be final. No additional cartoons will be printed in the contest. All you need to enter is right here.



Cartoon No. 1

Cartoon No. 2

Cartoon No. 3

CONTEST NEWS

Recently we asked entrants in the contest to tell us what they would do with the money were they to win one of the prizes. Although not yet a contestant, though he promises to enter shortly, an editor of *The New Yorker* in last week's issue tells his readers that if he wins a prize he will donate it to the "Lighthouse for the Purblind, Motes and Beams Division." It seems to us that this is an announcement that the money would go to *The New Yorker*.

One actual contestant, on the other hand, writes that were she to win a prize she would visit the Soviet Union because she has long been eager to see the worker's Fatherland.

Still Time to Enter

Entries in the $1,500.00 Cartoon Title Contest are pouring in from every section of the country. However, you still have time to enter yourself and have an equal chance of winning one of the two big prizes. Remember, you may send as many sets of answers as you wish, provided each set is accompanied by a $1, 10-weeks' subscription to THE NEW MASSES.

That 10-weeks' Sub.

Please remember that the 10-weeks'-for-$1 subscription is open *only* to contest entrants. The regular subscription price is $1.25 for three months. It is impossible for us to accept 10-weeks'-for-$1 subscription except from those who send them in together with their titles for the contest.

Important Notice

Please do not ask us to make changes in titles you have sent in, as we are unable to do so. Entrants who wish to have titles different from those originally submitted considered by the judges, must send in another $1-10 weeks' subscription to the New Masses and the new titles. However one or two of the titles in the new set may be the same as those first submitted.

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Editor of the New Masses.

ROBERT FORSYTHE,
Noted satirist.

GARDNER REA,
Famous artist.

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New Masses

FEBRUARY 18, 1936

National Negro Congress

ON FEBRUARY 14, the First National Negro Congress will convene at Chicago, the center in the past of the bitterest Negro struggles north of the Mason-Dixon line. And the delegates, over a thousand of whom are expected, will be greeted by Mayor Kelly of Chicago—a gesture which illustrates the growing recognition of the importance and vitality of Negro organizations in American life. With the Herndon victory, with repeated attempts "legally" to lynch the Scottsboro boys in the courts, with the growth of the unity between black and white workers, particularly in the sharecropper unions, the struggle for Negro rights has rapidly matured. Lincoln's birthday, which is celebrated two days before the Congress meets, marks the date when Negroes were constitutionally freed from slavery; the Negro Congress will press forward to give this legal freedom a basis in actuality. For, as the Call to the Congress states:

> Discrimination against them [Negroes] has increased on the job. Negro women are being literally driven out of industrial employment. Negro youth finds less and less opportunity to earn a living. . . . Even so-called "Negro" jobs are no longer available. . . . In every section of the nation the Negro is fast becoming a jobless race. The Negro farm population is fast becoming landless. . . . The ballot, the most elemental right of a citizen, is effectively denied two-thirds of the entire Negro population. In the courts of the land, the Negro is denied justice.

Against such conditions as these, the Congress will build a platform for the liberation of a great race. One fundamental point is to rid the trade unions of discriminatory practices. In the words of the Call, the Congress must lay plans to guarantee "security and manhood for Negroes in America."

Russell T. Limbach

"The leisure class in America is made up of those who are able to afford at least one servant."—J. P. MORGAN.

Labor Needs a Party

IT IS common practice, when labor disputes threaten to become serious struggles for the rights of the workers involved, for state officials to summon troops to "preserve law and order." Under martial law, scabs can be brought into plants, picket lines can be rendered ineffective. Hence governors and mayors backed by the big financial interests in Toledo, San Francisco, up and down the East Coast during the textile strike and more recently in Terre Haute have not hesitated to call out the troops—and Governor Olson of Minnesota was no exception. When the teamsters' strike in 1934 tied up the commercial life of Minneapolis, he instituted martial law. But mass pressure has since forced the Governor to change his position; when workers walked out of the Strutwear Knitting Company in the same city, troops were used to *close* the plant, to prevent thugs and strikebreakers from breaking the strike and shooting workers. It is common knowledge that the courts have never interfered with the use of troops to arrest, impound, terrorize or even murder workers on strike. But in this case, the Federal District Court of Minneapolis has promptly issued an injunction restraining the use of troops to close a plant—even when the employers refuse to arbitrate with striking employes. The courts have always looked upon troops as a class weapon —an instrument to enforce the oppression and exploitation of workers. This latest decision is merely a more naked

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statement of the courts' anti-labor position—a position illustrated by the Supreme Court's nullification of the A.A.A. Against this openly-declared class warfare, workers must utilize the strongest protests, the strongest mass pressure to force the courts in what is still at least a partially "democratic" country to reverse such patently unjust, undemocratic "justice."

AS YET no political party can exert sufficient pressure to carry the wishes of the working class and its allies among the farmers and the middle-class groups into the national political arena. On such questions as the use of troops against basic sections of the American people, the Farmer-Labor Party could be a powerful force for democracy. It is therefore disappointing to find the most progressive wing of the trade-union movement—the industrial-union bloc—under the leadership of John L. Lewis endorse without reservation Roosevelt's candidacy and delay action on the Farmer-Labor Party with the excuse that the present is not a propitious moment for its formation. The United Mine Workers' convention in Washington accomplished much: it carried the struggle for industrial unionism a long step forward by its open defiance of William Green, the spokesman of the reactionary executive council of the A. F. of L. which is still dominated by a narrow craft-union officialdom. Lewis in the past was discerning enough to respond to mass desire for industrial unionism. He obviously feels that his prestige lies in supporting Roosevelt's "liberalism" in contrast to the united front, anti-fascist Farmer-Labor Party. Lewis is remarkably sensitive to mass pressure (which chiefly explains his refusal—with accompanying histrionics—of the 100-percent salary boost passed by the Mine Workers' convention despite the protests of a large group). And Lewis can be made to respond to pressure that convinces him that his interests—if he wishes to retain his dominant position in American trade unionism—lie in supporting a Farmer-Labor Party and in abandoning the compromising class-collaboration which is entailed in his support of Roosevelt's New Deal "democracy."

THE Lewises and Olsons are not responsible for working-class victories. The rank and file struggles; the rank and file wins the battles. Only the unity within the working class in Pekin, Ill., forced the American Distilleries to remain closed; only the unity of the maritime unions on the West Coast in the face of the combined drive of reactionary union officials and shipowners can protect the Maritime Federation of the Pacific against the offensive that would rob workers of hard-won gains; only the unity of the rank and file won members of the building-service union in New York City closed shop and higher wages. And now the largest section of the A. F. of L., the Ladies' Garment Workers, is bargaining for improvement of working conditions among dressmakers, for the curtailment of abuses in that industry. Over 100,000 workers are involved. Although supported by workers and sympathizers throughout America, the Ladies' Garment Workers would gain immeasurably by the support of a powerful Farmer-Labor Party: a Farmer-Labor Party rooted in elements whose economic and political interests are in fundamental opposition to the interests of the small oligarchy that now dominates and controls American government, American industry, American agriculture.

A Gift to Schwab

THERE *is* justice, there *is* redress against oppression in democratic America—for Charles M. Schwab, chairman of the board of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. He didn't have to strike, he didn't have to picket. The courts may load heavy sentences upon militant labor for asserting their constitutional civil rights, but Mr. Schwab can with satisfaction point to a different experience. He hardly had to do any fighting for his "rights" when he was "persecuted" by the government. The federal government brought claim against Schwab and the Bethlehem Steel Corporation for recovery of $19,654,856.32 as being "unconscionable profit" made during the World War on government contract. William Clarke Mason, special master, in Philadelphia last week, not only quashed the claim but recommended that Bethlehem be paid an *additional* profit of $5,661,154 for building troop transports and tankers during the World War. This in spite of the fact that the 134-page report on the evidence says that the Emergency Fleet Corporation headed by Schwab made the contracts and resents "the commercial attitude" of Bethlehem and condemned Bethlehem for "demanding its pound of flesh."

BEFORE the government filed its claim, the Bethlehem corporation in 1925 sought to collect more than $8,000,000 additional profits on the war-time contracts. The master did admit Bethlehem "made a lot of money" out of the contracts, but denied the possibility that Schwab's heading of the Emergency Fleet Corporation could possibly have influenced Bethlehem's profits. It is curious that although all other firms getting contracts from the Emergency Fleet Corporation, were permitted to make only "*cost plus 10 percent*"—a restriction imposed upon Schwab's insistence—this provision was waived in the case of Bethlehem contracts. Perhaps this happened because Schwab accepted the Emergency Fleet Corporation leadership only on his public declaration that he would have no responsibility for Bethlehem contracts!

The Artists' Congress

AS THIS issue of THE NEW MASSES appears on the newsstands, artists from all over the United States are gathering in New York City to participate in the first Congress of artists ever held in this country. More than three hundred and fifty painters, sculptors, graphic artists, photographers and designers, representing the most diverse artistic points of view, most of them meeting one another for the first time, will collaborate in a three-day session of discussion and mutual counsel united on a common ground of struggle against the forces of war and fascism. Jolted by the crisis and left entirely in the lurch by the "cultured class," American artists are now taking the initiative in consolidating their own forces with other forces in defense of cultural, economic and political rights now imperiled by reaction.

RECENT significant developments have opened up entirely new perspectives for the artists of America. In New York City alone the Artists' Union has grown from a small militant nucleus into a powerful organization of over 1,800 members. All over the country unions have sprung up wherever artists are concentrated on government projects. Recent struggles have been mobilized on specific issues involving the rights of artists, among them, the determined movement of organized museum exhibitors for a rental agreement and the fight on the discrimination against non-citizens in the New

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York Municipal Art Gallery. At the open session of the Congress on the evening of February 14 at Town Hall, Joe Jones will describe the battles which already have been fought over critical, realistic works of art, how such works have been greeted with the sledge-hammer blows of the vigilantes and how workers have rushed to defend murals picturing their struggles. The Negro artist, Aaron Douglas will show the linkage between the brutal exploitation of the Negroes in this country and its reflection in American art; he will explain why the struggles of the Negro people call for the support of progressive artists. Of unusual immediate interest should be Heywood Broun's discussion of the means whereby the intellectual can collaborate with organized workers of all categories in the collective fight against reaction.

THE Congress should prove particularly fruitful from the viewpoint of creative art as well. During the closed sessions there will be analysis and evaluation of the influence of the social basis of art production upon the outlook of the artist himself; of the reconsideration by many artists of their esthetic position in their effort to make their work an effective weapon against reaction; of the creative forms now being developed by artists whose work is in the actual process of re-orientation. From the Congress should emerge not only a clarification of the main issues now facing the artist in his capacity as a worker, but a concrete program for creating a permanent national organization in alliance with the workers' movement which is, of course, the main bulwark against fascism. THE NEW MASSES extends the hand of fraternity to the delegates of the Congress.

Fingerprinting Workers

"ONCE an employe is registered with us, it would be impossible for him to be employed by you again for dishonesty or unsatisfactory service as he would be immediately checked up by our records," says the Scientific Identification Bureau of New York in a letter to hotel employers, recommending its service. For, says the Bureau, we will photograph and fingerprint your employes and it won't cost you a penny. (The employe however pays 50 cents for this privilege.) "What this means to you we need hardly point out," the Bureau continues; and indeed it could not speak a truer word, for this scheme is perhaps the most efficient instrument for blacklisting militant workers that has ever been offered. It costs the employer nothing, it may cost the militant unionized hotel worker his job. And if anyone is skeptical about the dogmatism of our last statement he has only to examine the famous blacklisting methods used all over the country to "weed out" militant unionists. Representatives of the hotel and restaurant unions have protested to the State Labor Department against this fingerprinting system, but without success, for the State Labor Department avows that fingerprinting will be used only in cases of individuals accused of misdemeanors. It would be naive to imagine that picketing would be excluded from this legal category under the "right" circumstances. This reply by the State Labor Department goes suspiciously well with the suggestion in Governor Lehman's annual message that people accused of misdemeanors be fingerprinted by the police. It proves once again the necessity for tireless vigilance over the activities of employers in league with governmental machinery whose practices and suggestions coincide so surprisingly well when it is a matter of undermining labor.

Jersey Judges the Home

"DO YOU believe in the Immaculate Conception?" Robert D. Grossman, Advisory Master of Chancery Court in Newark, New Jersey, asked Mrs. Mabel Eaton. "I don't believe in telling fairy tales to children about the stork," she answered. The court decided that her children must be taken from her. She was "thoroughly imbued with Communistic, atheistic and I.W.W. doctrines," according to the Advisory Master, "even though she does not hold formal membership in these organizations." Mrs. Eaton had, it is true, read *The Communist Manifesto* and attended lectures at the Rand School. It is certainly highly complimentary to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels that a simple reading of their pamphlet can "thoroughly imbue" one with Communist doctrines, but we fear it is a little less than the compliment the Rand School would wish for itself.

AS a matter of record Mrs. Eaton is now regarded as a Communist and an atheist. "I'd like to know why that's any reason a judge should take her own children from her, anyway?" asks one neighbor. THE NEW MASSES too, would like to know and we are sure that millions of other men and women demand the correct answer to that question. The American Civil Liberties Union has offered support and assistance in fighting this viciously stupid decison through every court in the land.

New Masses

VOL. XVIII, No. 8 CONTENTS FEB. 18, 1936

Editorial Content..... 3
Bills to Fight and Support..... 6
The Tilting Balance.....John Strachey 8
Pekin's General Strike.....Carl Haessler 9
Portrait of a Bachelor Broker
John Vincent Healy 10
In the Polish Cemetery....John L. Spivak 11
Little Orphan Annie, Fascist
Ralph McKinley 14
Elmer Rice Answers Raskob..... 15
The U. S. Army Finds an Angel
Seymour Waldman 16
True Bilt Clothing Shop....Arthur Pense 18
Money for Art.....Ralph Pearson 19
The Artists' Congress..... 20
Correspondence 21
Review and Comment
Papa Partisan and Mother Anvil
Michael Gold 22
California Battleground
Walter Ralston 23
Huey and His Hooey.....A. B. Magil 24
The Students Teach Themselves
Joseph Cohen 25
The Theater.....Stanley Burnshaw 27
Art
William Gropper.....Louis Lozowick 28
Chaplin in "Modern Times"
Robert Forsythe 29
Between Ourselves 30
Drawing by
Russell T. Limbach, William Gropper,
Vincent Van Gogh, Mitchell Siporin.

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178

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Support These Bills

FRAZIER-LUNDEEN SOCIAL INSURANCE BILL

Augments Lundeen Bill (H.R. 2827). Provides genuine insurance for the unemployed, sick and aged, disabled, mothers, self-employed professionals, farmers and small business owners. Funds to be derived from taxes on high incomes, corporation surpluses and accumulated wealth.

SCOTT BILLS (H.R. 9229-31 and H. Res. 370)

Would deprive Communications Commission of censorship powers over radio; would compel radio stations to set aside regular periods for uncensored discussion of social problems; and establish a thorough investigation of radio control and operation.

BENSON-AMLIE BILL

Formerly known as American Youth Act. Will provide for a comprehensive, democratically-administered system of student and youth relief as opposed to the inadequate allotments now furnished under Roosevelt's National Youth Administration. The Act outlines a system of control by youth, labor, farm and social service groups as opposed to the present supervision of the N.Y.A. by business and industrial interests.

NYE-KVALE BILL

Favors optional military training over compulsory. The American Student Union supports the bill in the belief that the passage of this measure will serve as another step toward complete abolition of the R.O.T.C. in the colleges.

ZIONCHECK BILL (H.R. 9115)

Guarantees a jury trial for all matter held non-mailable by the Postmaster General as "obscene" or "seditious." Would curb the present absolute power of the Postmaster General.

BYRNES BILL (S. 2039)

Makes it a crime to transport strike-breakers from state to state.

CONNERY RESOLUTION (H. Res. 141)

Would cut off federal supplies from the National Guard when it is used in strike duty.

AMLIE RESOLUTION (H. Res. 370)

To investigate the lot of tenant farmers and sharecroppers with particular emphasis on violations of their civil rights.

WAGNER-COSTIGAN ANTI-LYNCHING BILL (S. 52)

Authorizes the federal government to act in lynching cases as it does in kidnapings.

MARCANTONIO BILL (H.R. 8384)

Establishes the right of asylum for refugees from political, racial, and religious persecution of other countries.

MARCANTONIO AMENDMENTS TO THE BONUS BILL

The amendments forbid the altering of the relief status of men receiving the bonus; would finance the payment of the bonus by taxing high incomes.

CHILD LABOR AMENDMENT

Empowers Congress to limit, regulate and prohibit the labor of people under eighteen years of age. The amendment has already been ratified in twenty-four state legislatures; twelve more state ratifications are needed for the amendment to become part of the Constitution.

FARMERS' EMERGENCY RELIEF BILL (H.R. 3471)

Provides for the cancellation of poor farmers' debts; discontinuation of evictions and foreclosures; production loans without interest; cash relief for food and clothing.

Fight These Bills

KRAMER SEDITION BILL (H.R. 6427)

TYDINGS-MCCORMACK DISAFFECTION BILL (S. 2253)

Both these Hearst-inspired, fascist bills are the most serious peace-time threats to the freedom of labor, trade unions, minority groups, Socialists, Communists, etc., since the sedition laws of 1798. Freedom of speech will become more of a myth than it is today if either of these bills becomes law. The Disaffection Bill has already been railroaded through the Senate without hearings, debates or a record vote. The Sedition Bill has been favorably reported by the House Judiciary Committee.

DIES BILL (H.R. 8731)

Provides for the deportation of six million "aliens"—two to three million within the year. It includes provisions for the deportation of Communists, a term which (according to the League for the Protection of the Foreign Born) is defined to include all non-citizens who advocate the overthrow of the Hitler and Mussolini governments. Will also legalize the deportation of "aliens" who hold or accept jobs without the permission of the Labor Department. Permits will be issued only to those of "good moral character"—a phrase sufficiently vague to include non-citizen strikers or members of militant unions, etc.

DICKSTEIN BILL (H.R. 7221)

Introduced by the author of several reactionary bills dealing with aliens. This bill would authorize the "deportation of alien visitors to the United States who engage in political activities or the dissemination of propaganda instigated from foreign sources." The late Henri Barbusse, John Strachey, Tom Mann and other distinguished visitors would have been subject to such a bill.

HOEPPEL BILL (H.R. 3022)

Would refuse relief to non-citizens who have not declared their intention of becoming citizens and would make it unlawful to employ non-citizens on government jobs.

STUBBS BILL (H.R. 3048)

Provides that non-citizens shall not be employed while citizens are unemployed. Both the Hoeppel and Stubbs bills violate the right of all people "to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

CULKIN BILL (H.R. 2999)

Provides for the establishment of federal censorship over moving pictures to "protect" morals, opinions and religious beliefs.

HIGGINS BILL (H.R. 5370)

Punishes the receiver of birth-control information as well as the sender.

CLARK-NYE BILL (S. 3259)

Provides that all public statements, oral or written of officers of the military or naval forces shall be submitted to the Secretary of War or Navy for their approval. Failure to do so would bring dismissal or court-martial as penalties.

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HEAD OF PEASANT WOMAN

Vincent Van Gogh

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The Tilting Balance

Britain and the World Situation

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON, Feb. 10.

IT IS time to attempt another survey of the world situation, to strike another interim balance between the forces making for war and those making for peace and in particular between the pro-fascist and anti-fascist forces within Britain. For in the opinion of nearly every qualified observer, the world balance between peace and war, collective security and fascist aggression, will be tipped one way or another according to which set of forces predominates in Great Britain.

First of all then, it is possible to record a certain strengthening of the anti-fascist, pro-League, pro-collective security, pro-peace forces in Britain. The best way of telling whether one's friends have had success is to watch the reaction of one's enemies. Judged by this test the recent visit to this country of the two Soviet statesmen, M. Litvinov and Marshall Tukachevsky, marked a definite if limited step towards building up a wall of collective security against fascist aggression, for the German press has been attacking them since more than ever.

What are the reasons for this change of attitude on the part of the British government?

In the first place there seems little doubt that British fear of Germany has sharply increased. The British government has information of enormous German war preparations in the North Sea, which can only be directed against itself. Now the British government can react to this threat in two ways. It may, as it has often done in the past, actually become more friendly and pliant to Hitler in the hope of bribing or cajoling him into attacking the Soviet Union instead of Great Britain and France; or it may react to the German threat by beginning to build up a system of collective security based on France, Britain and the Soviet Union plus all the smaller League powers.

I think that it can be said that on this occasion the British government has met the new intensity of the German threat by an inclination towards the second alternative. But the balance of forces in Britain is still very even. There are still extremely powerful forces which are determined to come out in full support for Hitler. These forces are at the moment concentrating on pushing through a truly gigantic rearmament program to be financed, it is said, by a loan of no less than 300 to 400 million pounds sterling.

It may well be that no sooner will British rearmament on a grand scale have got well under way than we shall see a sharp revival of the pro-German policy. The next step of the struggle may well be fought out over the question of the atrocious Anglo-German naval treaty.

It is now undeniable that not only was this treaty a gross betrayal of the cause of peace but was also on the narrowest considerations of British interests a fatal error. The pro-fascist forces, which were then in the ascendant in Britain, were apparently so eager to get some form of agreement with Hitler signed that they scarcely paused to see what they were signing. In their very eagerness they somewhat overreached themselves for Hitler is using the treaty against Britain in such a way that it is becoming indefensible. Hence the pro-peace, pro-League forces in this country should concentrate on the demand for its denunciation.

Meanwhile, what of the original issue of the Italian war? What question of the League's resistance to Italian aggression? The balance of forces within the British governing class is disturbed and the picture is confused by the existence of an influential group of opinion led by Sir Robert Vansittart, permanent head of the Foreign Office which, while it desires on the whole to build up a system of collective security against German aggression, is unwilling to apply the same principles to Italian aggression. Sir Robert Vansittart himself, as we all know, was a leading spirit in the attempt to betray everything which the League stands for by handing over Ethiopia to Italy as a reward for aggression. Yet at the same time it is probably true that his influence is now being cast against support of Nazi Germany and in favor of strengthening the League. This section of governing-class opinion is clearly hopelessly out of touch with popular forces. It is unable to see that there is no hope whatever of building up the League of Nations and its collective peace system against German fascist aggression if at the same time Italy is positively aided in her imperialist depredations. It is thoroughly typical of the professional diplomat's mind that he ignores the fact that popular opinion cannot be mobilized behind a League which is no more than a grossly hypocritical cover for a new system of alliances which shall only apply the principles of collective security against Germany when it happens to be convenient to do so, while shamelessly ignoring them in the case of Italy.

The crucial question of the ratification of the Franco-Soviet pact should be settled by the time this article is published. It is said that a desperate last minute attempt by the French fascist forces, led by Laval, will be made to prevent its ratification. But once again I fancy that the decisive thing will be the attitude of the British government, for France is at the moment actively negotiating a loan with Britain. Hence we shall know by the course of the debate in the French Chamber whether in fact the British government has now come to look with favor on the pact.

Finally events in the Far East are moving nearer and nearer to a decision. The Japanese elections take place this month. The fascist forces in Japan are clearly apprehensive that their grip on the country will be weakened by a marked leftward swing at the polls. Hence there are many signs that the Kwantung army, acting as usual in virtual independence of the government, is at least toying with the idea of starting an immediate war, if not with the Soviet Union itself at any rate with the Peoples' Republic in Outer Mongolia in order to try and sweep the polls on a patriotic wartime appeal. Hence it is quite possible that large-scale war will be raging in Manchuria before the end of this month. But if it is not and if Japanese elections do show a move towards the Left, there is hope that the Far Eastern war will be once again postponed for some little time.

In this sphere the influence of the British government's policy is probably not so immediately decisive. But at the same time the British government will be sooner or later forced to reconsider its still active encouragement of Japanese imperialism; and if it does so, if it demonstrates to Japan that she will receive no British assistance either of a moral or material kind for an attack on the Soviet Union in the Far East, a considerable restraining influence will be exerted.

Hence all over the world the evenly-hung balance between peace and war depends largely on the policy of the British government and the policy of the British government in turn depends on an evenly-hung balance between the pro-fascist and anti-fascist forces within Britain. Finally the outcome of the internal struggle within Britain depends upon the rapidity and strength with which the now visibly reviving British working-class movement can make itself felt.

These cable dispatches from John Strachey have been appearing as a regular weekly feature of THE NEW MASSES.

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Pekin's General Strike

CARL HAESSLER

THE telephone, Pekin 977, rang incessantly. Messengers darted in and out. Orders were given practically without confusion. The headquarters of the Trades and Labor Assembly functioned like a miniature general staff of an army of occupation.

One more victory for general strike tactics.

One more lesson to labor on the role of the police and soldiery.

One more boost for militant labor confidence.

These are the immediate fruits of the successful general strike called by the Pekin, Illinois, Trades and Labor Assembly of the American Federation of Labor. It began on the dot at eight in the morning Tuesday, February 4 and was called off just as smoothly and efficiently at one o'clock the afternoon of Thursday, February 6. The strike at the American Distilling Company plant, cause of the general strike, was favorably settled immediately after the general strike ended.

Daily and hourly tactical problems and the larger problems of strategy "in case" were expertly considered and solved.

The "in case" problems centered round the expected coming of five companies of the Illinois National Guard, Governor Horner's strikebreaking experts. The soldiers were concentrated in the armory at Peoria, ten miles away and in Delavan, home of Col. A. L. Culbertson, military strikebreaking bigshot under many Illinois state administrations, both Democratic and Republican. Among the companies was a howitzer artillery outfit from Mt. Vernon. The strike was won before the guns began to boom.

Another "in case" problem was the threat by Pekin merchants to reopen their tightly-shut shops in defiance of the general strike committee. This also did not come to a showdown.

The immediate general strike demands were two: 1. That Police Chief "Tear-Gas" Harry Donahue resign or be fired; and 2. That Mayor W. A. Schurman resign from the Citizens' Committee that attempted to "settle" the distillery strike.

"Tear-Gas" Harry is still in office though he probably won't last much longer. Mayor Schurman and all of his committee resigned. In addition the distillery agreed to keep its plant closed until a settlement is negotiated.

Great pressure was brought on the mayor and the commissioners from employer associations and bankers all over the state to keep the police chief in office.

"If Donahue goes, they say, look out!" was the comment in The Peoria Star. "Watch out downstate, in other states! Things may pop for public officials."

From Chicago some bloated former Pekinese wired Donahue to "give 'em hell."

They are afraid that workers through their unions will take control of the law enforcement power and use it for *their* aims as employers and bankers are now using it for their own.

Donahue, ex-prizefighter, had waded into a peaceful strike at the distillery plant and doused the pickets with tear gas and stink bombs. He did this three times. The third time was once too many. Organized labor, strong in Pekin had enough of such treatment. In behalf of its brothers in Distillery Workers Union 19538 of the American Federation of Labor the general strike was enthusiastically voted.

Members of thirty-one crafts walked out Tuesday morning. Only scab plants remained in operation and one or two union plants where contracts were obstacles to immediate action. The street cars—scab—kept running. The buses, also scab, ran, but kept away from the distillery. The power plant kept going. Three large industrial plants were picketed, Fleischmann Yeast, Quaker Oats and Corn Products Refining Company. At the Corn Products plant Federal Union 18581 was ready to quit but did not want to embarrass the management by a sudden shutdown. The plant announced it would close Friday, but before the hour came the general strike had ended.

Though the Hearst anti-labor press tried its usual sob stuff about milk being denied babies and invalids and coal being kept from shivering widows and kiddies, this was not the case. The perfectly coordinated strike committee issued permits for all emergencies and coal trucks and milk wagons could be observed on the street at all hours attending to these calls.

But all other truckers quit. Building tradesmen working on the high-school gymnasium quit. Movie operators walked out. Barbers and beauticians took it easy. Filling stations were idle. Bakers handled no dough. Operating engineers, firemen and oilers, leather workers and, above all, restaurant workers and beverage dispensers, joined the great walkout.

The august and ordinarily revered Kiwanis Club had to postpone its regular Wednesday luncheon. There were neither eats nor drinks at the customary hangout. Earl Herbig of the Bartenders' Union is president of the central labor body.

While The Chicago Tribune and other papers spoke of mob violence and mob control of the town of 18,000, people on the scene marveled at the discipline of the strikers and their sympathizers.

The usual bombing frameup was pulled off and the shooting of a cut-rate taxi man was twisted into strike stuff but nobody took these incidents seriously. The bombing was the traditional kind that rips up a porch but injures no one. The house was occupied by a special deputy, referred to by seasoned reporters as a "new" enforcement officer. It is generally thought that distillery undercover operatives had planted the bomb to put union labor in bad. And a bullet whizzed through a window of the house where the company-union secretary made her home. Here, too, nobody was injured.

These episodes failed to swing general sympathy from the strike, even though State's Attorney Nathan Elliff kept shouting that the taxi man had been "shot by unionists."

THE little town was crowded with out-of-town reporters and photographers. It looked like labor rumbling into action on a big scale. But apart from the pickets and the efficient working of the general strike headquarters and the closed shops and taverns and movies there wasn't much to photograph or write about.

People who had read Russian history were reminded of the sober, unspectacular working of revolutionary committees after the Czar and the bourgeoisie were overthrown.

But "Tear-Gas" Harry Donahue whined from police headquarters: "About fifty radicals, backed by the racketeers, are trying to run this town and sooner or later we'll bring them to time." He arrested some pickets and a couple of trade-union women accused of threatening merchants who were slow in closing up. Most of these have been released. He offered protection to the merchants, who looked dubiously at his force of ten men and then at the 3,500 trade unionists on strike. They did not take up his offer.

The distillery strike had been smoldering and blazing up since the summer of 1934 when the N.R.A. union drive reached Peoria. Militia had been on the march once before but had not actually leveled muzzles at the strikers. The company labor policy was marked by bad faith toward unionists, with agreements and understandings repeatedly violated.

At the time the general strike broke out the National Labor Relations Board had been stalling for many months on charges by the union that the company had fired three active unionists, was discriminating in favor of company-union members and had refused to bargain collectively with the employes. The dilatory board will probably hand down a decision in a hurry now. The plant, how-

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ever, has again opened after an agreement with the strikers was reached.

All through the general-strike camp fires blazed in front of the tents pitched by the pickets in front of the plant in the sub-zero weather. The road to the distillery looked as though it were held by outposts of a civilian army. Nearby, the Illinois state police played poker in their shelters. Within easy distance the armed state soldiery was mobilized.

Party politics was the reason that Governor Horner (New-Deal Democrat) hesitated to start the militia marching into Pekin. Horner has been ditched by the Chicago Democratic machine for renomination in favor of Doc Bendesen, Chicago health commissioner who successfully suppressed the news of the disastrous amoebic dysentery epidemic until the World's Fair was just about over.

Horner hopes to win renomination anyhow but can't do so without the labor vote. So in spite of appeals from Mayor Schurman and Sheriff Goar he would not give the marching orders to his strikebreaking guards. Earlier in his term, soon after election, he had poured the militia into the coal fields where they terrorized and even murdered citizens without themselves receiving any punishment.

Politics may also see a finish to "Tear-Gas" Donahue. The commissioners of Pekin can be recalled in May by the voters if they refuse to oust the police chief before that time. The commissioners hope the bitterness will be over before then and so does the chief, who is too old and soft to go back to prizefighting where the other fellow is as well armed as himself.

The Pekin general strike is likely to have profound reverberations in Illinois. During the great procession of labor risings under the New Deal, when San Francisco, Toledo, Milwaukee and Minneapolis were in the forefront of mass action, Chicago and its hinterland was singularly apathetic. Not one sizable strike except the bungled and ineffective Chicago motorbus walkout in the city took place. Those who followed labor affairs wondered where the ferment would burst. But it did not burst at all until the Pekin Trades and Labor Assembly made its courageous decision last week.

The papers and the radio stations were full of the successful demonstration. Labor men who have chafed at the quiescent union policy in the city and state took courage. It is possible that well-coordinated actions involving both employed and unemployed workers will take place before long, particularly as the Illinois relief policy and W.P.A. policy have been getting more unendurable month by month.

National Guard commanders are thumbing again the ruthless instructions for riot duty printed in the 1934 manual. They include commands in bold-face type that "No Blank Cartridges Shall Be Issued." They also direct that officers shall "employ overwhelming force at the outset" and shall order to shoot low. They remind those in command that "from the viewpoint of tactics, parks, public squares, important street intersections, viaducts, bridges and the plants, mills and factories directly involved in strikes, with the possibility of violence, must be given special consideration."

Directions are given for the use of tear gas, sub-machine guns and tanks. Concentration camps, in which strikers and sympathizers and their families may be put, are authorized. With an eye to winning over to the militia the shopkeeper and small-landlord element in the community in case of strike, the manual provides further that troops shall be fed in restaurants instead of in company mess halls and that private buildings shall be rented instead of establishing camps. As the Emergency Plan shrewdly states, "This policy has a good effect on local business."

What plans the Pekin general strike committee had made "in case" the troops should march into town is not known. It is known, however, that they would not have been caught unprepared.

Portrait of a Bachelor Broker

JOHN VINCENT HEALY

Who is that being sprawled across that bed,
Half-nude with blood-lines quivering like strings,
Pale and with flaccid muscles on his arms?
Who is that being with the tousled head
Breathing in maytime and the lilac's charms,
Quiet, then disturbed as if by insect stings,
Sleeping, this time his face toward the door,
Jerking with orgasms, weeping in dreams,
Waking and scratching, stepping down on the floor?

What is he doing with The New York Times,
Tapping the table with a silver spoon,
Squeezing the grape-fruit, twirling the finger bowl,
Nagging the servant, laughing, neglecting the mail,
Reading with relish of the latest crimes,
Suddenly whistling a Cole Porter tune,
Recalling a bad deed, now beginning to stare,
To put his hands to his throat to feel his soul
Exude once more into the morning air?

What is he doing with the ticker tape,
Nervous, impatient, now the piston stirs
And grinds him back into a hollow greed
Which, subsiding, leaves him a rattled soul
That takes to bacardi for its escape,
That, leaving his office, braces up with sneers,
Sits up and stiffens at the subway's speed,
Considers how his thoughts come into shape,
Wonders how much of him he can control?

What is he doing with The New York Sun,
Dozing with dinner or waiting to leave,
Waiting to waken and read in a chair,
Or waiting till some one comes to the door,
Weak and perplexed from thinking and desire,
Stupid and shaking dandruff from his hair,
Limpid and weary with the pulse of grief,
Aimless and vapid now his day is done,
Watching his hands throw profiles on the floor?

What should he drink now if all there is is drinking?
Where should he go now if there's no place to go?
What should he think now if all there is is thinking?
But has he thought of where his fathers came?
His father's fathers? Or of his brothers? No?
Not thought at all of where to place the blame?
He often says there is no blame at all;
Yet he sits there and calls another's name
Although he knows no one can hear his call.

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In the Polish Cemetery

JOHN L. SPIVAK

WARSAW.

IN THE third-class compartment on the train from Lemberg to Warsaw there was a policeman with his wrist manacled to the wrist of a rather thin man in his early thirties with beady but bright and cheerful eyes. I assumed the prisoner a thief, for it is quite common for policemen, their wrists manacled to those of their prisoners, to be seen walking Polish streets. A woman with a kindly, sympathetic face, a rather cocky self-assured man, my translator and I occupied the rest of the compartment.

All of us stared uncomfortably out of the window, trying to keep from looking at the manacles or meeting the prisoner's eyes as the train rattled on past peasant villages dotting the monotonously level land now white with the winter's frost. No one spoke and the silence became more embarrassing than if we had talked. Suddenly the prisoner announced cheerfully:

"I'm on my way to Koronova to do five years."

The policeman looked stolidly at him and shifted to a more comfortable position on the wooden seat, securing a firmer hold on his prisoner by a twist of the wrist. The woman's eyes filled with pity and the short cocky man smiled a little contemptuously with a look that said it was a good thing the police got him; that now there would be one thief less in a land where thieves are plentiful.

"I had been doing two years in Lemberg for stealing but they knocked off six months for good behavior and let me out on parole," the thief volunteered pleasantly when no one said anything after his announcement.

My translator was translating what he said in a low voice and the thief apparently thought he was commenting about him, for he turned abruptly upon me with a note of harshness in his hitherto cheerful voice:

"You are well dressed, eh? Then why are you riding third-class, tell me that!"

Before my translator could tell me what he said, the thief continued angrily:

"I am not good enough to be spoken to, eh? But I have been spoken to by teachers —the best of them! By professors and scholars and men who know more than all of you will ever know!" He made a quick motion with his hands and the manacled one fell back.

The cocky man with the contemptuous smile now laughed openly.

"I suppose they invited you to their house for tea?" he asked sarcastically.

"I lived with them!" the thief exclaimed. "In the Lemberg prison!"

"Fine people," the man commented dryly, "to be in prison."

"They were not in prison for stealing," the thief said quickly. "They are not like me. They would not take a groschen from anybody. They are good men, but very unfortunate. They were political prisoners."

"Oh," said the man. "Communists, eh? They—"

"Don't you say a word against them!" the thief interrupted harshly. "They are better men than you and me."

"You got out on parole and now you are on your way to do five years in Koronova. You learned a lot from the Communists!"

The prisoner nodded his head and smiled cheerfully. He had returned to his good humor. "Well," he said apologetically, "there was a chance for a piece of business—" Everybody laughed. Even the stolid policeman.

"And now I got five years! I have always been very unfortunate. Even when I was in Lemberg and we started a hunger strike because they were beating us I was the one who got the biggest beating!"

"The Communists—" the man began tauntingly.

"I will not hear a word against them," the thief interrupted sharply. "I can tell you do not like them and I will not hear a word against them! They are not like us. When we thieves and robbers went on a hunger strike against the rotten food and the way we were being beaten, the Communists also went on a hunger strike—just to show their sympathy for us! Tell me, who would do that for a thief? Instead of spitting on us, they used to tell us about the world and the history of the world. They used to tell us more than I ever learned in school—"

The woman nodded her head sympathetically.

"I'm on my way to do five years in Koronova," he continued, turning to her, "to do five years at hard labor. Eh! That's nothing. I do not care. I like to work."

"You'll get a chance to like it," said the man dryly.

"Tell me this," the thief turned upon him. "They give me five years to do hard work. Why did they not give me work when I was free? Tell me that!"

The man stared at him without answering.

"When I was young I got four zloty a week for working and I was hungry, so I began to steal—" the thief continued thoughtfully. "And now that I have grown up I steal because they will not give you work. They give you work only when you steal!"

He shook his head and laughed as though the absurdity of it was terribly funny.

"I wish I were on my way to do five years for doing what the Communists did—to make speeches and organize the workers—instead of stealing," he volunteered. When no one answered him, he shrugged his shoulders and added regretfully, "But I am a dark man and I do not know enough; but they are good men, those Communists."

The policeman, who had not opened his mouth, let the prisoner talk. As the train entered the Warsaw station, the thief laughed cheerfully.

"Change for a five-year ride," he called loudly. He bowed with exaggerated deference to the man who had aroused his ire. "Good day to you, sir," he said, holding his left hand to his heart.

The policeman, whose stolid expression had not changed during the entire ride, now turned to his prisoner.

"We shall have to walk through the streets," he said. "I do not want to shame you by having these handcuffs on your wrist. If you will give me your word not to try to escape I will take them off."

The thief looked at him in astonishment.

"You will take my word—a thief's word?"

"If you give it," said the policeman solemnly.

"I give it," said the thief. "See, you"—he turned upon the cocky man—"follow us and see whether a thief can keep his word! When you talk to me like that," he said, turning to the policeman, "I would walk all the way to Koronova without a guard and appear at the prison walls. That's the way to talk to a thief!" he said loudly, turning again to the man who had irritated him. "Human, this policeman—almost like a Communist!"

I LEFT him and went wandering to the great market at Hale Mirowskie, where the people came to buy from the little traders, those who can afford only a little stall or unable to afford even that, stand about on the curb so closely together that they form a solid line of humanity. One old woman stood at one of the street corners clutching seven thin radishes in her hand. It was obviously all she had to sell and as I passed she held them out, calling: "Prosha pana."

"I don't want any radishes," I said, shaking my head.

She smiled a friendly little smile.

"But they are good radishes," she protested, holding them toward me. "And only five groshen for one."

"I am not buying radishes," I explained, "I just wanted to see how you live and work in this market."

"I was not always like this," she said quickly. "Once when I was young I was a servant girl in a grand house. Then I was

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happy and had a place to sleep in all my own and all I wanted to eat." She looked at her radishes and smiled a little wistfully. "But that was long ago. I married a man and so I lost my nice place to live."

"And your husband? You are still with him?"

"No. He is dead. But I have two daughters. One is in America and the other is in Lodz but I never hear from either of them. I do not know if they are living or dead."

"Then whom do you live with?"

"I have a son. But he is not working. He cannot find work—"

"Do you live in Warsaw?"

"No," she shook her head, "I live seven miles from Warsaw in a little village."

"How did you get here?"

"I walked, of course," she said. "At two o'clock this morning I got up and with my radishes walked to Warsaw because everybody comes to buy here on Tuesdays and Fridays. These are the big market days and I had to be here at five o'clock. It takes me longer," she added apologetically, "because I am old now and cannot walk so well."

"But it snowed and rained last night—"

"Yes. It snowed and then it turned to rain. Just before I got to Warsaw it turned to rain and the roads were very muddy and it was hard walking."

"And you stay here how long?"

"All day until it gets dark and then I walk back to my village."

"How much do you make after a day's work like that?"

"Sometimes a zloty and fifty groshen and sometimes two zloty and sometimes not even fifty groshen."

"And on that you have to live half the week?"

"Me and my son. He is ill now and cannot get up from bed or he would be helping me," she added quickly.

"When you have so little, what do you eat?" I asked.

"Bread and potatoes. What else is there to eat? Potatoes are very cheap but the bread is dear. Sometimes if I make only fifty or sixty groshen after all day here I buy only potatoes and we have them. But if I am lucky to make a zloty, then we can have bread too."

I had been taking her time which she might have used to sell her radishes and I gave her a zloty. She offered me the seven radishes she held in her hand.

"No, no," I said. "I have taken up your time so you keep this zloty."

"The whole zloty!" she exclaimed, holding it in her hand and looking at it with unbelieving eyes.

"Yes, of course. You keep it. Put it away. I guess you can use it. Life is pretty hard, isn't it?"

And suddenly those old eyes filled with tears and she began to cry.

"Ai, pana, pana," she sobbed, "no one knows how hard our life is."

THE desire for "something to happen—anything"—is widespread and there is a whole vast area in Poland extending from 100 to 200 miles from the Russian border and running about 1,000 miles from the northern frontier of Czechoslovakia to the southern frontiers of Lithuania and Latvia where the "anything" is being translated into action with organization behind it. This is the "pacification area," so named because Poland is trying to "pacify" the peasants. How the peasants feel and how they are being "pacified" is not being made public by the government or by the Polish press nor does the iron censorship permit news of it to seep out if it can be stopped.

"Pacification" first began in 1931 in the region immediately north of the Carpathian-Russ section of Czechoslovakia and has become increasingly brutal and ruthless. The men and women, both radical and conservative, who told me what is being done to the peasants there were as frightened as those who speak in Italy or Germany, for in Poland the authorities need only to suspect that you talked of these matters to find yourself on the way, without a trial, to the concentration camp at Bereza Kartuska.

Not far away was the Soviet Union where the peasants had been miserable but now news was seeping across the frontier that Russian peasants were eating again, that they had salt for their potatoes, that they ate meat, that they had bread, that things were getting better while in Poland life for the peasants was steadily growing worse. Peasants turned their eyes eastward where Soviet soil now offered a haven of plenty. A strong Communist sentiment developed and this resulted in the effort to "pacify" the region.

Battalions of soldiers swarmed on villages seeking the leaders but the peasants refused to surrender them and in desperate efforts to root out the "Reds" the officials introduced the custom of "common responsibility." This procedure is quite simple, soldiers surround a village where a Communist is suspected of being active and line up all village residents. The officers then announce that the village is "commonly responsible" for the existence of a Communist in their midst and unless he is surrendered within one hour every fifth person, man, woman or child above fourteen, chosen at random, will be placed under arrest, beaten severely and then imprisoned on suspicion of being themselves Communists.

On my way to the village of Kolki in the Volhynia district, where I had heard children had been "pacified" for asking for free schools I talked with peasants who told me many things with anxious pleas not to tell that they had talked with me, pleas as anxious as any I encountered in Italy or Germany. Even government officials in Warsaw, sick of the occurrences in the "pacification area" talked. And I heard tales like the one when the military swept upon and surrounded the little village of Bobrka where a Communist was active. The threat of "common responsibility" was made and either because the peasants were terrified or because there was an informer in their midst the Communist was found and taken away to prison "and the *izba* (peasant hut) where he had lived was burned to the ground and over the cold ashes plows were drawn and the land was plowed so that no one would ever know even the ground where a Communist had lived."

There were many such tales as I went wandering around the Volhynia district, stopping at *izbas* that sagged from the weight of their snow-covered straw-thatched roofs and then I came to Kolki where an old and bearded peasant told me of what happened on May Day of 1935.

The new Polish Constitution had guaranteed free schools and there had been joy in the hearts of the "dark people." The illiterate and hungry peasants had heard that the educated did not hunger and they wanted to see their children educated so they "would not hunger as we are hungering." When no schools were built the peasants began to demand them and at first shyly and with many apologies and then a little irritably they asked why the schools were not being built for the children and the authorities had no answer. On May Day of 1935 a twenty-two-years-old Communist, the local school teacher, organized the peasants from the neighboring farms and led a May Day march on the village. They carried a red banner inscribed with the words "Give Us Schools for Our Children" and well over a thousand peasants, ancient Poles whose ancestors had tilled the soil for generations, their wives, younger folk and children of school age, marched upon the village of Kolki. There was a picnicky air about it. The long winter was over. May and the sun and warmth were here and to most of the gay and laughing line it was a great big party to be enjoyed, a sort of communal celebration. The young teacher led the procession and as they approached the long, level road leading to the village they met a group of policemen obviously on their way to intercept them.

"Where are you going?" the police demanded.

"To the village to ask for free schools," the teacher responded gaily.

"Our children will not be as dark and ignorant as we," said several peasants crowding around the police.

"You cannot march on the village," said the police.

"But the new constitution has guaranteed us free schools," the teacher protested.

"You will have to disperse," said the police. "You cannot march on Kolki."

"But all that these peasants and children want is to ask for the free schools the constitution has guaranteed them," the girl protested.

The police officer shook his head angrily and spread out his arms to signify that the road was barred. The girl turned to the peasants and waving the red banner with the words "Give Us Schools for Our Children"

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called, "We have the right to march to Kolki and we are marching."

The policeman slapped her and in a few moments the gay and happy peasants and their wives had so set upon the police, kicking and cuffing them, that they beat a hasty retreat.

"Ah," sighed the old peasant, "we laughed —even the children laughed when we saw them running back to Kolki; and the teacher laughed and said that that showed what we could do when we were determined, that a few policemen could not stop us."

They marched on again, singing the International, laughing and joking about how the police had run away.

And then they saw a detachment of soldiers in the distance and an old peasant, wise in the ways of the military, called a halt.

"They are there to stop us from going to Kolki," he said. "They will threaten us."

"We are not children to be frightened," said another. "I have been a soldier and I am not frightened so easily."

They placed the children in the front line so that the soldiers could see they were on a peaceful mission, placed them right behind the teacher who was leading them and carrying the red banner asking that the children be not allowed to grow up in the darkness of their elders.

The officer in command of the soldiers shouted to them to stop. The teacher's face flushed as red as the banner she carried and she turned to the peasants behind her.

"Let us sing!" she called loudly. "All together—as we go to demand the end of darkness for our children!"

She waved the red banner and her voice came strong like a challenge to battle:

"Arise! Ye prisoners of starvation—"

The children who had learned the song joined in. Quavering peasant voices picked it up and then the voices were drowned out by a burst of machine-gun fire.

Nineteen were killed. Twelve little children who had gone to plead for free schools that they might not grow up in the darkness of their elders, the teacher, still clutching the banner even in death and six peasants. They had been "pacified."

"We could not even bury our dead," said the old peasant, rubbing a grimy hand over his nose. "We were told that here and there they are buried, the teacher and the children. There were many wounded and when we fled we carried them with us to our homes."

Not a word of the massacre was published. The organ of the Socialist Party, Robotnik, learned of it and tried to publish an account of what had happened and the issue was promptly confiscated.

"And now?" I asked.

He stared at the floor.

"Now we remember our dead," the old peasant said quietly.

We sat silent for a while, none of us feeling much like talking after this tale.

"Some day," said the peasant slowly, "where those children died and where that teacher lies buried blood will run like a river in the spring and it will not be the blood of peasant children."

"They will shoot you down as before," I said.

"They will shoot many of us down," he returned quietly, "but there"—he motioned to the east—"not a two day's journey by even a starving horse, are soldiers of the peasants. They are our soldiers. And they will come to help us."

THE SENATE

A painting by William Gropper

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Little Orphan Annie, Fascist

RALPH McKINLEY

HAROLD GRAY, creator of the country's No. 1 fascist comic strip, has come forward publicly with a group of theses which should explain to those amazed by the recent antics of "Little Orphan Annie," the ideology behind his "arts." In the January issue of Quill, a monthly magazine for writers, editors and publishers, Mr. Gray contributes the following apothegms:

1. Comic artists have a right to express convictions on any side of any important issue.

2. There is no use for the American Newspaper Guild.

3. A man is worth just exactly what he can get.

4. Life is a battle, with victory for the brave and strong-hearted alone.

Mr. Gray, in his article entitled "I've Learned about Comics from Her," frankly admits making a practice of "violating the standing rule against editorializing," because without such "raids" Annie alone "would soon pall terribly." He reveals that contrary to a report in Time he was *not* told to stop editorializing and received no comment of any sort from his syndicate. Moreover, having counted on "Americanism outweighing wild-eyed radicalism in this country" he is proud to report that even if a West Virginia paper *did* cancel his comic strip, his list of papers jumped ("carrying my royalty checks pleasantly higher, of course").

Mr. Gray's method of attack, as he explains it, is more calculating than it is brave. He sets the stage for a raid for several months and then, in his own words, "sneaks up" on the main story, comes into the open and drives through "the real action" within four weeks. Then comes the sporting part. He gets "cleanly out of the way and onto safe ground before the deluge" of protest. There is plenty of protest, but those who find his anti-union propaganda objectionable are "professional protesters" and it is better not to give them a chance "to get set."

The Gray brand of Americanism is approved and applauded by solid citizens, the artist points out, but at the same time it must be dished out "at carefully spaced intervals." Otherwise the protest from "little labor union headquarters" might become cumulative and of sufficient force to cause trouble.

Those unfamiliar with Gray's exposure of "labor racketeers," which the artist refers to in the autobiography of his rise, need study only the "Annie" release of July 17, 1935, to understand why the chronicle of "just a simple orphan kid" should have aroused "vituperative and viciously abusive mail."

On that day in Gray's comic strip we find three well-bearded fanatics (the type Red-baiting cartoonists have presented as Bolsheviks ever since 1917) discussing the organization of a union of workers in the Eonite plant owned by Daddy Warbucks—to whom Little Orphan Annie is a sort of juvenile Peaches Browning. The organizers are anxious for unionization because that means "initiation fees," "fines," "assessments." "We cannot even bomb the plant—" one laments, "there are too many guards." These agitators, enlisted by a villain named Slugg, want to get Eonite away from good old Warbucks. But those who are bent on the evil of organizing the workers, take a smearing. On August 3, under the general title "The Workers Arise," a gang of "loyal" company men dispose neatly of the Reds. Mr. Gray here demonstrates his fine Americanism. His is the Ku Klux brand of patriotism. When one of the hirsute radicals cries, "The hour has struck—the time has come to act," a true "American" cries "I'll say it has" and the following sentiments are heard:

> Have you got that tar boiling, Jerry?
> Who's got the feathers?
> Arise, eh? See how you like arising on that rail—
> This is just an old American custom, boys—

and the organizers are promptly tarred and feathered. The incident is captioned: "Our Feathered Friends."

The artist establishes clearly on August 8 that the imminent attack by workers who have been aroused by "fulminators" (although said workers were satisfied with working conditions on July 17 and showed their satisfaction by the use of tar and feathers five days ago) threatens not only Mr. Warbucks but all mankind. Daddy's speech to Annie on August 8 is another lyric:

> Suppose the mob should destroy the plant and deliver the secret of Eonite into Slugg's hands—that would mean ruin and slavery for the whole human race instead of the prosperity and happiness that I am trying to bring to all.

However, the whole human race takes it on the chin four days later, when the mob destroys the Eonite plant and kills off old Eli Eon, the inventor, in the bargain. But the National Guard arrives to handle the situation. On the 13th the colonel of the guard, a handsome, broad-chested fellow with a mustache like that of Mr. Esquire, reports on the telephone to Daddy W.:

> There's a little sporadic fighting—a few wild-eyed remnants of the mob still insist on having their skulls cracked—but everything is well in hand.

And the mob which wrecked the plant is described, through Mr. Crackbrain:

> They were mad—their eyes were glazed—their faces contorted and bestial.

Patriot Gray's attack on the American Newspaper Guild, like his drawing and writing, has the grace and charm of a dancing elephant. "I admit complete ignorance of any use for the American Newspaper Guild," he writes, bringing up the subject in connection with a letter he received from a Guildsman. "From my contacts with members of the Fourth Estate, a man who has what it takes doesn't need any Guild or Union, nor will he fail to collect every dime he is worth from a delighted and grateful public."

In the next paragraph come other deft epigrams, one right after the other:

> I have always felt, even passing through the $15-a-week stage, that a man is worth just exactly what he can get. No Guild on earth can make a stupid reporter brilliant, or even capable and self-reliant.

The axiom that a man is worth what he can get heaps kudos on Al Capone and makes Jesus Christ look like a piker, because he got practically nothing.

While your friend McKinley doesn't know about all the Guilds on earth, as a member of the American Newspaper Guild he can't recall a single instance wherein the A.N.G. promised to make a stupid reporter brilliant, or even capable or self-reliant. As a rule, stupid, incapable and unreliable reporters are not in a position to join the Guild, since such men are not ordinarily hired or maintained by bright executives.

That victory-for-the-brave Gray should openly announce his intention of continuing to malign the labor movement at carefully-spaced intervals and that he could boast of his syndicate's silent approval of his editorializing, should be of interest to all unions, editors, reporters and even some publishers. Maybe this time the professional protesters can "get set" for Mr. Gray.

Already the Springfield, Mass., Guild is set for Daddy Warbucks and the little orphan girl. The Guildsmen in that city took Gray's Quill article to the editor-in-chief of The Springfield Republican, in which the comic strip is appearing. Said the editor: "Thank you. I'll watch the strip carefully in the future." But the Guild is pressing to have the strip removed on the strength of its past record, plus Mr. Gray's credo.

Those who find Annie poorly drawn and devoid of anything resembling humor, should not conclude that the artist can't be funny. He can, even without trying. In a concluding paragraph to his success story in the Quill, Mr. Gray writes:

> Whatever else I may ever attempt to do with the strip, you may be sure it will always remain clean and decent.

That's very funny, Mr. Gray.

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Elmer Rice Answers Raskob

The Liberty League Solicits Customers

February 4, 1936.

Mr. John J. Raskob,
Empire State,
New York City.
My dear Mr. Raskob:

I AM happy to be one of the 150,000 recipients of your chatty, personal letter. It is indeed an honor to be included in that heroic band of "members of stockholders committees, industrialists and leading figures in business and civic life," (New York Herald-Tribune) to whom you have addressed your clarion call "to rally to the standard of the American Liberty League" (New York Herald-Tribune) in defense of the sacred rights of property.

It was gratifying to learn from your letter that you have acquired "a competence for old age and the care of dependents." I have, of course, heard rumors to that effect, but one scarcely knows what to believe these days, and it is good to learn over your own signature, that you are not a candidate for home relief, an old-age pension or any of the other hateful forms of governmental patronage.

Too, I was greatly interested to learn something of your background and early experiences, which, in many ways, are similar to my own. I, also, had the good fortune to be born a citizen of the United States—as had my parents before me—and, like you, I was obliged, at an early age, to make my own way in the world. You were lucky enough to be able to remain at school until you were nineteen; I had to go to work, at fifteen.

My first job paid me $4.50 per week. At nineteen (when you were beginning at $5) I had already worked my way up to $9. Later, my fortunes, like yours, improved and, like you, I have succeeded for a good many years now, in making a comfortable living (although I must confess that I have never had to face the embarrassing necessity of avoiding an income-tax liability of $600,000 in a single calendar year).

But now I come to an important point of difference between us. It is simply this, Mr. Raskob: my nature is sadly lacking in that happy resiliency which sparkles through every paragraph of your refreshing and stimulating letter. Temperamentally, I am morose and embre and so I have never been able to take off the memory of those bitter early ars of drudgery and starvation wages. Morally, I have continued, throughout the years, identify myself with the tens of millions underpaid, underfed, underprivileged young n and young women, from whose blood and sinew such great fortunes as yours and those of your associates are distilled.

Like you, I am the head of a family and so I understand how comforting to you is the knowledge that your twelve dependents are not in immediate danger of want. But are you not forgetting, Mr. Raskob, that for each of your twelve there are today, in this land of opportunity and plenty, one million unemployed men and women?—human beings with desires, needs and feelings very much like yours, who are denied, through no fault of their own, the bare necessities of life, the bare right to provide for themselves and *their* dependents. Other tens of millions lead a precarious existence, with little or no margin between themselves and actual destitution, never knowing an instant of real security, their pinched lives darkened by the ever-present specters of illness, unemployment and penniless old age. What about their "human rights"?

You are one of the leaders of a great industry which has always been conspicuous for its refusal to grant to its workers their "human rights" to organize for the betterment of their own condition. You and your fellow captains of industry have met the "group initiative and enterprise" of these workers with the clubs of the uniformed forces of law and order and with the bullets of hired assassins. Secure in your economic oligarchy, you have not hesitated to rob men of their employment, without warning; to toss them on the industrial scrap-heap at forty; so much slag in the process of smelting your gold. Your associates in the American Liberty League—the feudal barons of Delaware—are the beneficiaries of organized mass-murder; they have coined their wealth from the bodies that strew the battlefields of the world.

To the hungry, the maimed, the disinherited of this land of ours, your phrases about liberty and freedom must seem as empty as the Empire State Building or the brown derby of the Happy Warrior. Compared to the "freedom" which serves only to entrench a handful of plutocrats in the possession of their dubiously-acquired wealth, the "tyranny" of a form of government which guaranteed, to all its citizens, economic security and a minimum of decent living would be a blessing, indeed.

Literature is not your trade, Mr. Raskob, and so we must not condemn you for the ineptness of your "paraphrase" of the Declaration of Independence. But permit me to counsel you to read further in that splendid document. In the very paragraph which you "paraphrase" you will find these words which require no paraphrase: "Whenever any government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it and to institute a new government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

When the people of this country see fit to exercise that right, the industrial magnates and the captains of finance will go the way of all the despots and oppressors, whose inordinate lust of wealth and power has blackened and reddened the pages of human history.

And so, my dear Mr. Raskob, I decline with thanks your friendly invitation to join the American Liberty League. I prefer to take my stand with that "vicious radical element" which clamors for a new social order, based not upon the preservation of the property rights of the predatory few, but upon the satisfaction of the human needs of all.

Very truly yours,

ELMER RICE.

New York, N. Y.

From John J. Raskob's Letter

Beginning life as a poor boy blessed with splendid health, the finest heritage which a good father and mother can leave any child, I was able to acquire a good grammar and commercial school education before starting to work at five dollars per week, at the age of nineteen years, to make my own way in the world.

It was my good fortune to be born a citizen of the United States of America—a country whose government is founded on a constitution which respects the rights of persons and property as fundamental to every successful form of government and which teaches the duty of government to encourage and protect individual and group initiative and enterprise; to foster the right to work, earn, save and acquire property and to preserve the ownership and lawful use of property when acquired. These are human rights.

Through the years I have been successful—successful in retaining good health and, through hard work and saving, in acquiring a competence for old age and the care of dependents. . . .

As a citizen with the responsibilities of the head of a family of twelve, as a property owner, stockholder and director in several corporations, I hope you will not think me presumptuous in calling on you and your friends to unite with others in issuing a clarion call to all liberty-loving citizens to join the American Liberty League . . . which is doing everything possible to root out the vicious radical element that threatens the destruction of our government.

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The U. S. Army Fin

SEYMOUR WALDMAN

And in truth there is in war itself something beyond mere logic and above cold reason. There is still something in war which in the last analysis man values above social comforts, above ease, and even above religion. It is the mysterious power that war gives to life, of rising above mere life. It cannot be explained on any statement of profit and loss; it can be read on no balance sheet and some are forever incapable of understanding it. The Savior Himself did not hesitate to draw metaphors from camp and field, and He pronounced no anathema against war. It may be that peace He died to promote was not the peace of ending battles but the peace within the soul.

—Major General James G. Harbord, chief of the A.E.F. Supply Department and chairman of the board of directors of J. P. Morgan and Company's Radio Corporation of America.

AT THIS very moment the United States is perfecting a gigantic military-industrial machine for war against another country. The new Roosevelt budget calls for over a billion dollars for the army and navy. Never in the history of the United States has so much money been budgeted for military purposes in peace time. Hundreds of military bills, calling for even greater expenditures, are now before the House Military Affairs Committee.

Brigadier General Charles F. Kilbourne, in charge of the War Plans Division of the General Staff, has admitted that the War Department is prepared to go into action "like a flash of lightning."

But it is not the government alone that is busy preparing for war. At least 12,000 key industrialists hold government contracts for mass production of war materials at a moment's notice. The government has already guaranteed war-time profits to big business. Thousands of industrialists hold reserve commissions in the army. At the outbreak of war, these men will be the military masters of America's factories.

The government and big business have already begun construction of thousands of war planes, scores of warships, hundreds of armories. The peace-time standing army, navy, Marine Corps and the National Guard, as well as the reserve forces, have been tremendously increased in the past year. The new presidential budget calls for still further increases. American fortifications are being speeded up at enormous expense in the Pacific area, especially in the Far East. Hawaii, Alaska and the Philippines are rapidly being converted into American Singapores. The Mexican and Canadian borders now screen chains of military flying fields.

A conscription act, drafted by the War Department, lies ready for passage by Congress immediately upon the outbreak of war. The War Department program will put the General Staff and the bankers and industrialists in direct control of a completely militarized nation. These Roosevelt plans fulfill Herbert Hoover's plea for the complete war-time suspension of all civil liberties in the United States. At this moment leading members of Roosevelt's Cabinet are pressing Congress to enact laws which will abrogate civil rights even before the outbreak of war.

The New Deal is rushing preparations for action against the American people on two fronts. It is preparing for war abroad and terror at home. Slaughter at the front and intensified strikebreaking, union smashing and abolition of free speech, press and assemblage in the rear. These intense preparations substantiate General Hugh S. Johnson's statement to the Nye Committee that "the N.R.A. has grown out of the plans developed by the War Department for the conduct of a future war."

The imagination of the world has been gripped by events in Ethiopia. But our diplomats and generals operate from the standpoint of American imperialism. Britain is considered our chief ultimate rival for world domination, as the conflict grows more and more acute in South America and China. But at present the focal point of American foreign policy is the Far East, since Japan is a much more immediate threat to American imperialist holdings and expansion. Japan has already gobbled up Manchuria and big areas of north China. It wants to lop off parts of Siberia, to seize oil in the East Indies. Japanese imperialism has already injured American trade in the Orient.

This may explain why at the various London naval conferences Washington attempted to organize an Anglo-American naval alliance against Japan. In the off-the-record speeches, top-ranking American admirals have declared that for every warship the Japanese build "we'll build two."

AROUND this objective, official and semi-official jingo, propaganda is centered. October 27 happens to be Theodore Roosevelt's birthday. Ostensibly in honor of that sword-rattler, the Navy League inaugurated Navy Day, whose name and purpose have been taken over from the Kaiser's own Navy League. Last fall, the Navy Day orators included Rear Admiral William H. Standley, Chief of Naval Operations and a leading spokesman at the London naval conferences; and Assistant Secretary of the Navy Henry L. Roosevelt, the President's cousin.

They talked about justice, national tranquillity, international peace—and big armaments for the United States. Nobody mentioned that Roosevelt's campaign manager in 1932 obtained election funds from shipbuilders with the promise that his chief, once in the White House, would give them more than blueprints. Nor did anyone mention the patriotic founders of the Navy League: J. P. Morgan; Col. Robert M. Thompson, of the International Nickel Company; John Jacob Astor; Anson Phelps Stokes; George Westinghouse; the Midvale Steel Company; Harry Payne Whitney; Charles M. Schwab and eleven other big financiers and industrialists.

The people who coined fortunes out of the last war are now piling up millions from the present preparations for future ones. The Navy League is one of their chief propa-

PARTISANS

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ganda organizations whose purpose it is to create the illusion that the private interests of big business are identical with the public welfare of the country as a whole—precisely the same methods used by all the imperialist powers during the last war.

Only a few months ago, the United States Navy maneuvered in Asiatic waters and threw its wash in the direction of Japanese territory but a few hundred miles distant. The Japanese admirals understood. Guns are the world's greatest linguists. Washington prepares on this assumption.

"The chief concern" of the Bureau of Aeronautics of the Navy, Rear Admiral Ernest J. King, chief of the Bureau, declared on December 8, 1935, in his annual report to the Secretary of the Navy, "has been to maintain the aviation forces afloat in the highest state of readiness for war in accordance with the Operating Force Plan."

Alaska and the Aleutian Islands figure prominently in the American war plans. Frontier air bases are to be erected along the Canadian border and on strategic island possessions—at a cost of $120,000,000. Ship subsidies will be distributed to provide fast tankers and freighters. Frenzied mechanization and motorization consume millions of dollars.

Fresh from his Washington labors as Chief of Staff of the United States Army, General Douglas MacArthur now represents the United States government as the military overlord of the so-called Philippine Commonwealth. What the "independence" of the Philippine Commonwealth amounts to, however, is evident in MacArthur's recently announced conscription plan, which is aimed to net American imperialism 500,000 trained Filipino reservists within a few years. "Filipino youths are to begin military training at the age of ten under this plan," declared The New York Times dispatch (November 19, 1935). Mussolini starts them at eight.

Bombs are being stored secretly in T.V.A. warehouses. Thousands of airplane fields, for which there is absolutely no commercial necessity, are being constructed all over the country by the W.P.A. under the supervision of Lieutenant-Colonel Francis C. Harrington, recently a member of the General Staff and now chief engineer and assistant W.P.A. administrator. Fulfilling the demands of the Chambers of Commerce, about one hundred and fifty armories—there are nine hundred blueprinted — are being constructed under War Department supervision, to house munitions and strikebreakers. It has been announced that Lieutenant-Commander T. A. M. Craven has been made "Chief Engineer of the Federal Communications Commission . . ."

The War College has taken over from the Kaiser's military machine the idea of conditioning and disciplining the youth for war. For this purpose the government has provided guns, bayonets and labor camps under the supervision of 10,841 army officers. The real nature of the so-called Civilian Conservation Corps camps was revealed some time ago by Assistant Secretary of War Woodring, who characterized it as

> the first real test of the army's plans for war mobilization under the National Defense Act. It proved both the efficiency of our plan of defense and the equally important success of the Military Procurement Plan—the army's economic war plan.

For the purpose of militarizing the youth, Roosevelt has set aside $600,000,000 of the $4,000,000,000 "works" funds to double the number of C.C.C. camps. These will now prepare 600,000 young men for war at the front and fascist terror in the rear. And this, Roosevelt explained, is only a beginning. He has announced that the C.C.C. is to be permanent.

The militarization of the youth goes still further. As a result of the economic crisis, hundreds of thousands of schools have been closed throughout the country for lack of funds. Teachers have gone without pay and pupils without instruction. But the administration, supported by both the Democratic and Republic legislative machines, has jacked up the appropriation for the Citizens Military Training Camps. For the year beginning July, 1935, the government has set aside $2,000,000 for these camps—100 percent increase over the previous year.

Mitchell Siporin

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THE intensified drive of big business and government to militarize the youth is also reflected in the increase for the same period in the appropriation for the Reserve Officers Training Corps. This branch of the war machine was given $4,452,304, as compared with $3,125,551 for the previous year, to set up new R.O.T.C. units in a large number of additional schools and colleges.

Nor is this all. Secretary of War Dern, in his December, 1935 annual report to the President, asserted that General MacArthur's plan for training 50,000 boys annually in the C.M.T.C. should be executed. "Provision should be made for enrolling 50,000 youths annually in the Citizens' Military Training Camps. The number to be trained this summer at such camps is 30,000."

The new Roosevelt budget doesn't provide a penny for the increasing millions who need relief to stave off starvation and sickness. But it allots nearly 200 millions *more* for "national defense" construction and maintenance than was earmarked for this purpose last year. The ranks of the officers and enlisted men of the army, navy and National Guard (the government's chief strike-breaking weapon), were swelled to unprecedented peace-time proportions by last year's war appropriations. Nevertheless, additional forces have been provided for all divisions of the military services.

Roosevelt's new budget estimates 200 million additional dollars with which the navy is to purchase 400 new war planes and thirty warships. There is an estimate of seventeen million dollars for 6,500 additional enlisted men. This will bring the navy enlisted strength to 100,000 men. The marines are to get 1,000 more men and at least a score of additional officers. Millions of dollars additional will enable the army to obtain 7,000 more men, bringing its total enlistment up to 165,000. The Air Corps is to receive an estimated $62,000,000 or $17,000,000 more than last year's. The National Guard is to get an estimated total of $36,343,152, an increase of $2,355,829 over last year. This will give Secretary of War Dern the 15,000 additional men which he wants for the purpose of maintaining the National Guard "at a minimum strength of 210,000."

In his annual report, the Secretary of War has indicated what is in store for those bold enough to criticize big business and the war machine!

> Those well-meaning but misguided persons who agitate against military training in colleges are . . . seeking to undermine the nation's ability to defend itself. We must assume that all citizens, except a few who despise our form of government and desire its overthrow, think the United States is worth fighting for. If they have that patriotic feeling in their hearts, they should not permit themselves to be misled by seditious propaganda, but should willingly and loyally support every agency created by the national defense act, which sets up the best organization for a citizen army that has ever been conceived.

Expenditures for direct and indirect war preparations, under regular congressional appropriations and from so-called Public Works funds, are another illustration of the unprecedented peace-time speed with which big business and the government are preparing for war. Between May 28, and December 4, 1935, a total of $767,608,936, or almost one-fifth of the "works" fund, was allotted for direct and indirect war preparations. Nearly 20 percent of "works" money for war! And this sum was added to the regular congressional War and Navy Department appropriations for the fiscal year beginning July, 1935, *and* to the hundreds of millions of dollars allotted from June, 1933 to April, 1935, for war preparations under the P.W.A.

The regular congressional appropriations totaled $908,216,473. Direct and indirect war projects under the P.W.A. ran up to $796,979,757, exclusive of nearly 340 millions for the War Department engineers, a substantial part of whose work deals with seacoast defense. To this add the $767,608,936 from the $4,000,000,000 fund. *We get a grand New Deal total for direct and indirect war preparations (not counting the billion in the new budget) of* $2,472,805,166! That is what was happening when President Roosevelt stood on the field at Gettysburg in 1934 and assured the American people that "the passions of war are mouldering in the tombs of Time. . . ."

As for labor, the War Department has its apparatus and its legislation prepared to draft millions of workers, farmers, professionals and small businessmen into the key factories and the front lines. For the manpower of the nation is to be conscripted.

True Bilt Clothing Shop

ARTHUR PENSE

Grind away, brother
tack pockets,
tack pockets, swing elbows,
flash scissors, flash scissors!
pile-bundles-and-bundles-and-bundles
in the grip of the hours,
force minutes in vain:
ten o'clock;
ten-five;
ten-six; ten-eight!
tack seams, nurse headaches!
tack seams, tack headaches!
grim Tuesdays
dull Wednesdays
stamp feet in your brain!
Edge basting, steam pressing,
sleeve setting, steam hissing!
wipe sweat;
halt groan;
tired eyes,
search dusk.
Drag bundles, drag seams;
drag bundles, drag seams,
drag seams,
long seams,
short breathing
long seams!
TRUE BILT cuffs,
t. b. coughs
lung splitting
blood spitting
tears
in THE HOME
OF THE BRAVE!
Wipe tears,—
wipe tears, search dusk!!!
find brother, find sister!
gather voice, gather will!!
shed fear,
clip hours!
rend dusk!
crush dark!

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Money for Art

RALPH M. PEARSON

ONE of the electric issues which is to come up before the Artists' Congress Against War and Fascism at its meetings at The New School for Social Research on February 15 and 16, is the economic life-and-death-matter of rentals. Shall the artist be paid for the entertainment or educational value of his contribution to society when that contribution is exposed to public gaze in an exhibition or shall he remain as at present the only unpaid participator in the show? The American Society of Painters, Sculptors and Gravers has forced the issue to the front by refusing officially to send its works to an exhibition at the Worcester Museum of Art unless a rental fee is paid. Francis H. Taylor, director of the Worcester Museum, speaking for his Museum and the Association of Art Museum Directors, rushed bravely to the defense of the status quo and refused, not only to pay the rental in this test case, but to grant its essential economic justice. And so the Artists' Congress will pose the issue afresh in an address by Katherine Schmidt, Secretary of the Painters and Sculptors Society, and in supporting discussion.

The arguments pro and con already aired in print have been healthy and illuminating. It is healthy for artists as a group, for instance, to assert themselves the same right to remuneration for service rendered as is unquestionably granted (in theory at least) to the producer of potatoes or coal, and (in practice) to the bankster, the bootlegger, the lipstick and automobile manufacturer, the art-museum janitor and director. The healthiness persists even though this professional self-assertion has been forced by the economic pressure of the moment instead of by the logic of the issue which had the same validity before 1929 as it has had since. It is healthy also to force out into the open the argument of the defense for the continuation of the present set-up so majestically typifying the current state of divorce between society in general and the living creative experience of which the artist, at his best, is the tangible expression. And it is eminently healthy for the public to meet the issue face to face and be forced to decide what it all means and what value, if any, there is in the artist or his work that is worth renting.

FOR THE ARTIST: The arguments so far presented on behalf of the living artist condense to the following:

Out of an estimated annual art purchase turnover in this country of $126,000,000 the living artist receives a negligible amount because the bulk of this expenditure goes to middlemen for the purchase of ancient works.

From the crowds of 50,000 or 100,000 people who frequently attend a museum exhibition of contemporary work the only tangible benefit to the artist is an occasional prize or purchase so rare and uncertain as income that it is negligible as a means of paying the monthly bills and so continuing production.

The "free publicity" so frequently mentioned by the defenders of the status quo as an asset to the artist is not accepted as legal tender by the neighboring utility, grocer, or landlord.

If funds are now available for all manner of other art investments and expenses, such as the purchase of ancient masterpieces and near-masterpieces, the erection of $11,000,000 museum buildings, the financing of staffs to operate such buildings, of upkeep and current expenses including transportation and insurance on "priceless" exhibits, they should also be available to pay the living producer who alone can create the "priceless" treasures which will be venerated and housed in the glass cases of tomorrow.

Since rental charges are already accepted as a means of remunerating agencies like the Modern Museum, the American Federation of Arts and The College Art Association for their expenses in sending out current traveling exhibits, it is the rankest kind of unfair discrimination to refuse that same remuneration to the artist—*at the very least to cover his operation-expenses of frames, materials, wear and tear and transportation.*

The argument of the Museums, as voiced by Mr. Taylor, to the effect that "museums are incorporated to promote the arts rather than the artist," and that "the legal and moral responsibility of a museum is to its public," is self-contradictory when used as an excuse to refuse to pay out museum funds to living artists.

FOR THE MUSEUMS: In addition to this last point the defense of the museums boils down to a claim that American museums cannot afford to pay rentals because their expenditures are all booked in other directions, that they would not do so if they could because they feel they are already being more than generous to living artists by providing free exhibition space, buying a few pictures each year and giving a few prizes, that purchase funds are given and bequeathed to museums for "general purposes" and that the traditional (and safe) interpretation of these words has always been to buy objects whose validity has been proven by time. Mr. Duncan Phillips protects his own pleasure in playing the role of private philanthropist from all assaults of equity and ethics by the comfortable conclusion that the poor, innocent artists are "being unionized and herded" in to a "rash policy" of "holding up their best friends, the museums."

Aside from the understandable resistance of the typical museum director to change which will increase his administration difficulties and even endanger his salary (for he does not serve the Great Cause free, as he expects the artists to do), these objections to paying the artist and so financing production are extraordinarily illuminating as a gauge of American culture. It is their implications in this direction which I particularly wish to consider. The economic justice involved in the issue seems so obvious that it needs no more than the bare statement of facts. Great crowds of citizens do come to see the works of living artists. The museums, in showing such works are fulfilling their announced function of "promoting the arts." Ergo, funds expended to cover all expenses of contemporary showings—including remuneration to the performers who make the show—are as logical as any other expenses.

BUT beyond this simple matter of economic ethics looms this other issue—much more sinister in its far-reaching implications.

The official refusal to pay the living creator of art any wage at all, while vast sums are readily spent on the purchase and housing of famous masterpieces of the past, is based on the assumption that the social value of art to individuals and the general public lies in hero-worship, or in basking in the aroma of famous works expressing the life-drama of other days and peoples, *instead of in the experience of creative doing for its own values.* This is the great cultural fallacy of our time. This is the root-cause of our current starvation of the senses, of our individual and national divorce from the arts, of the spiritual poverty of our pathetic gestures of compensation for the resulting emotional void. This is why we rear great and costly copies of Greek temples to house our American Supreme Court, or—supreme absurdity—to enshrine the bones of our loved and very American Abe Lincoln. It is this sorry escape from creative responsibility that accounts for our period styles and the debased and corrupt aping of "antiques" and all our antiquarianisms applied to modern life in general. It is the touching acceptance of this escape philosophy which prompts Al Smith to desert his "sidewalks of New York" for the Fifth Avenue splendors of Louis IV. Imagine! And Morgan and Frick and Andy Mellon! All enjoying the basking in the art suns of long ago. All proud of themselves for crashing the gates of dead periods of art magnificence when artists somehow got paid enough to live and practice and produce. All salving uneasy consciences, perhaps, by their "generosity" in allowing their economic vassals to come and see "their" treasures now and then or to "promote the arts" by willing them to the Metropolitan. "For years," said Mr. Mel-

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lon's attorney at the government trial for fraudulent evasion of income taxes, "Mr. Mellon has planned to establish in Washington 'a great temple of art.' Regardless of geographical location, Mr. Mellon felt that Washington should be the cultural center of the nation and *he planned to make it* the equal of Paris and London, if not of Florence and Rome, in the world of art."

There you have it. The expected fruit of our current museum mind. Or of our prevailing antiquarian mindedness of which the museum itself is a product. He, Andrew Mellon, the rich collector of antiques, could make a city the cultural center of the nation! That is the "cultural" joke. That is the great negation. The denial of its opposite—creative participation. Did Andy never read his history? Did he never hear that his prototype, that earlier collector of other people's money, Lorenzo de Medici, contributed to the greatness of Florence by paying artists over long periods of time to work and work and produce great paintings—the very same paintings which he can now buy with his forty, out of some four hundred, millions? Yes, he probably has read about that simple little fact. But the museums and the art dealers have taught him that Lorenzo was wrong. The dealers wouldn't make their profits, and the museums wouldn't someday get his collection, if he acquired any such ideas. And besides it is much easier to buy certified greatness than to search out or commission the uncertified current masterpiece. And nobody would envy him for such unromantic procedure. No, there are plenty of reasons.

By refusing to pay a rental to living artists for the showing of their work (and a larger one than the modest one percent of retail value per month asked by the Painters and Gravers Society) the art museums of the country are fostering the current divorce from art, are approving the hollow pretensions to culture in which our barons of finance dress themselves to enhance their counting-house respectability, are failing in their assumed role of leadership in the "promoting of art" and in the education toward *doing as the Greeks or Florentines did* instead of hero-worshipping at the shrine, are failing to realize and teach the great historical truth expressed by Schiller in these words:

> It is only when man has begun to invent artistically that he also begins to think consciously, it is only when he himself builds that he begins to perceive the architectonics of the universe.

But we are asking too much. The museums cannot take leadership, save in the exceptional case, in this fundamental reorientation toward art as experience. They are themselves an expression of the philosophy of escape. They do not understand the deep meaning of the treasures of their glass cases. It will take a new kind of education in doing and in understanding through doing to evolve that leadership. Historically that responsibility belongs, not to rich men and eclectics, but to artists. The present is no exception to that rule. The artists must teach the people in general that the museum directors and their boards of trustees are wrong—*that art cannot be promoted without promoting the artist*—as a professional practitioner and as an amateur, existing timorously in every child and adult. In that way alone can we find out what Schiller's words mean. In that way alone can we learn the critical discernment which will impel us to throw off our party costume of pseudo-culture and build a new culture from the ground of experience up to the flowering of an experienced expression. If the museums taught thus they would indeed be fulfilling their moral (if not their legal) responsibility to their public. It is a difficult job, I admit. And it demands as thorough a housecleaning in the matter of standards, procedures, philosophy of life, etc., among artists as it does among the present powers that be. The Artists' Congress should prove an important step in the housecleaning process—both within and without the ranks of the artists.

War and fascism are pressing calamities. But there are other cultural calamities in us and among us that need attention. The rebuilding of attitudes of mind in one department facilitates the rebuilding in others. Our job is to build a new civilization both economic and cultural. The two fronts must be attacked as one. Rental to artists is one step in such an attack.

The Artists' Congress

The Congress, with about 350 members from all sections of the United States, opens with a public meeting at Town Hall, New York City, Friday evening, February 14. There will follow two days of closed sessions at the New School for Social Research, devoted to discussion of social, economic and esthetic problems of vital import to artists today. Members of the Congress, committed to a program of actively opposing war and fascism, are expected to form a permanent organization to defend democratic rights of free expression.—THE EDITORS.

STUART DAVIS, Secretary of the Congress: "American artists awoke to modern art when the great Armory Show was held in New York in 1913. Today they are rapidly awaking to social realities. The response to the Call indicates that the Congress will be the biggest thing in American art since the Armory Show.

"We moderns had to wage a hard fight to gain recognition of the importance of our contribution to art. Now, together with artists of every possible creed, we face a much bigger battle. What we are struggling for are basic conditions of security which will allow our free functioning as artists.

"This security is not alone economic, but concerns the constitutional right of free expression which forces of fascist orientation the United States would so willingly thrust aside. If the artists of America do not take action in their own interests while there is yet time, they will awake to find a jury passing on their efforts which uses barbed wire and bayonets instead of esthetic judgments."

WALTER UFER, N. A.: "The first step for this Congress to take should be to organize the artists of America into one strong union. This national union should never hesitate, but at all times vote to support any strike of fellow-workers who are not called artists. Artists are serious workers and by this support would draw the admiration of all workers throughout America and even the world. This step would prove to all workers that artists are real men and women and not merely geniuses that live on air.

"If you realize that you are not living through a depression, but that you are in a transition; if you realize that this move is part of your position against war and fascism which you signed for when you answered the Call to this Congress, then you must consolidate in order to become powerful and move along with a world that is changing."

MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE: "Fascism is a real danger because it practises a subtle deception upon the masses it intends to b[e]y. Though most American farmers an[d] [w]orkers are groping for a way out, they h[a]ve [n]ot hold of one important idea—that th[e]y [m]ust work and fight together in defense o[f] [t]heir needs. Now artists too are beginn[i]ng to realize that individually they are h[e]lpless, that they must band together for its [s]afety and freedom. The struggles of artists [a]nd intellectuals, linked to those of workers [a]nd farmers, in defense of their common, [c]onstitutional rights, can build a bulwark [a]gainst fascist oppression."

AX WEBER: "When I read about the [r]estrictions introduced by the New York Municipal Committee restricting exhibitors in the municipal gallery to New York residents [who] are United States citizens, I became convinced that the Artists' Congress is most timely and absolutely essential. Vigorous protests by hundreds of artists forced the withdrawal of that discriminatory ruling and also of the hospitality clause, a thinly-disguised censorship rule. This most recent showdown leaves no room for doubt in my mind that, sooner or later, artists as well as other workers will have to unite to fight the subnascent reactionary forces."

YASUO KUNIYOSHI: "Times have changed. Artists ought to get together to

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protect their democratic rights. We can't just sit back in our studios as we used to, because economic pressure forces us to act. We must fight against reactionary nationalism."

ROCKWELL KENT: "I joined the American Artists' Congress because I believe in labor unions, in political action by unions, n the intelligence of artists and consequently ope that an artists' union would serve the nly worthwhile political cause of today: Communism."

WILLIAM ZORACH: "I don't know hat the Artists' Congress hopes to do or vill try to do. I joined it because I hope hat it may do something to bring to the ttention of people the importance of art, living rt by living artists—as a factor in their lives -and that it will try to wrest the power of ecting art from the museums and dealers, especially the museums, which are too often just tools for shrewd dealers in antiques.

"Art has too long been controlled by the dead hand of endowments and the voices of trustees whose interest in art is financial. No great art ever developed in a country where all the stress is on the past and on fictitious commercial values. I am not sure that the business end of art can be handled by artists but under any conditions artists should have a voice in the direction and control of art. I am not politically minded but I wish to add that I think it is valuable when any organization puts itself on record as against war and fascism."

ADOLF DEHN: "The Artists' Congress is the first constructive step for an understanding of the cultural and economic problems that face the artist. Out of the Congress can come an organization, which I like to believe, will help the artist function much more successfully than he does as an individual who finds that the present system i too much for him."

ARNOLD BLANCHE: "I joined the American Artists' Congress because I believe that only through collective action can we defend ourselves from those destructive handmaids, war and fascism, and because I believe that only through collective determination can we achieve a better world.

"As artists I feel our destination is one with all other workers."

PETER BLUME: "Artists must realize their social responsibilities in helping to stop the menace of fascism. This Congress will join artists in a fight against that danger."

Correspondence

The "Liberty League Protects Me"

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Your readers may recall that the Liberty League declared a few months ago that it would furnish legal assistance to Americans without means to protect their constitutional rights. Inasmuch as I am a native Nebraskan and went through the unfortunate experience of being seized last summer by Kansas City police, blackjacked, beaten, held five days incommunicado without a hearing, and notes, the result of a two-months' survey of the drought areas of Kansas, were confiscated, all for the "crime" of having been seen leaving the home of a Kansas City Communist (as was reported in THE NEW MASSES of September 24), I felt that I was entitled to some attention from the Liberty League.

Consequently, a friend of mine, Israel Kliegman, a New York attorney, communicated with Jouett Shouse of the League, requesting assistance. Mr. Shouse then communicated with Mr. Kliegman, advising him that his letter was being forwarded to R. E. Desvernine, chairman of the General Lawyers Committee of the League. In due course, not hearing from Mr. Desvernine, Mr. Kliegman communicated with him. That was nearly two months ago and, to date, there has been no reply from Mr. Desvernine. Verily, does the League intend to protect the constitutional rights of impecunious American citizens or does it not?

New York City. LOWELL CHAMBERLAIN.

Phelps and the Olympics

TO THE NEW MASSES:

It will be of interest to all anti-fascists that the League of American Writers has protested in a letter to William Lyon Phelps, critic and radio commentator, for his participation in a committee which will select American literature in the field of sport to be displayed at the Olympic Games in Berlin this summer.

The letter from the League said in part: "We are deeply shocked that an enlightened person like yourself should lend himself to the forces of barbarism and reaction; particularly at a time when a great protest is being rolled up against enriching the Nazi government with American tourist money and so prolonging the torture and intolerance of that regime. We had hoped to count on you as one of many who would take a stand against fascism both abroad and here at home."

The League numbers among its membership Archibald MacLeish, the poet; Malcolm Cowley, editor of The New Republic; John Chamberlain, critic for The New York Times; Josephine Herbst, novelist, and many other prominent poets, critics and writers of fiction. Waldo Frank is chairman.

New York City. GENEVIEVE TAGGARD.

Can Our Readers Advise Her?

TO THE NEW MASSES:

I don't live here, I just use the writing room. Jobless, practically friendless, a girl not accustomed to facing the brutalities of life, maybe over-sensitive, here I am, a white-collar bankrupt on the rocks of New York. I see many people fighting for their rights, on picket lines, at home-relief bureaus, demonstrations and meetings. I feel often like an outsider, I haven't all their courage, yet I am stringing along with them, they are my own. Yes, I know it is the real thing, yet I still have a tortured mind. I need a helping hand, but many radicals seem to frown when you ask some simple question. When I'm among them I feel outside, but when I get away from them I long to go back. It sounds like a sob story, perhaps I can't explain. Maybe I am too meek for living. Does anyone on THE NEW MASSES know the answer?

ALICE R—

Eviction in Arkansas

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Sixteen croppers' families have been thrown out of their homes onto the Arkansas highway, because they refused to give up their membership in the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. This was the written charge against them, in the eviction notices served by C. H. Dibble, plantation owner of Earle, Arkansas.

These hundred and five men, women and children are camped in tents on the grounds of a Negro church, without adequate food, heat, or clothing. They were offered land and crop if they would renounce the union, but they refused.

Protests of union members in the vicinity were met with gun fire and threats of lynching. Two Negro union members were shot in the back as they were entering a church where a union meeting was being held. White union organizers and lawyers were driven across the county line with a warning never to return.

Free speech and the right peaceably to assemble are denied in Eastern Arkansas cotton country. The S.T.F.U. is determined to break down fascist methods being used against the croppers in their struggle to organize and hold their homes and their right to the land.

These evicted families cannot live much longer in tents. Action must be taken to return them to their homes and win for them the right to till the soil. Financial aid to feed and clothe these tent colony families is urgently needed. Mail or wire protests demanding relief for the evicted croppers to Gov. J. Marion Futrell, Little Rock, and to C. H. Dibble, Earle, Arkansas, the demand that he let them return to their homes and jobs.

J. R. BUTLER, President,
Southern Tenant Farmers' Union.

Rose Pastor Stokes Foundation

TO THE NEW MASSES:

Our late comrade, Rose Pastor Stokes, bequeathed her little home in the country as a preventorium for leaders of the revolutionary movement where they could rest and gain new strength to carry on.

The Westport place proved entirely inadequate, but out of this bequest developed the Rose Pastor Stokes Foundation, to which has been offered the use of a large fifteen-room house at Croton, New York. This home stands on beautiful landscaped grounds in the quiet of a high elevation, making it an ideal location for health recuperation.

The plan of the Foundation is to create a sustaining fund to be raised by subscription amongst friends of our late comrade and sympathizers of the labor movement, so that the charge for board will be fairly nominal.

We invite your readers to help us in this movement.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Papa Anvil and Mother Partisan

PARTISAN REVIEW AND ANVIL is a curious name for a literary magazine. Like many such compound names, it means that a shotgun wedding has taken place. It represents a merger of two magazines: that spunky pioneer of midwest proletarian literature, Jack Conroy's Anvil; and Partisan Review, organ of the New York left-wing intellectuals.

Well, the child of roughneck Father Anvil and his thoughtful college bride has at last appeared. It's a vigorous male, retaining the best features of both parents; papa's earthy directness and mama's erudition and sensibility. Handsome and clear-cut in appearance, pulsing with revolutionary life, Partisan Review and Anvil is now on the newsstands and as a magazine, promises to be a success.

In modern times, when nearly all literature is more self-conscious, when books and plays are often political deeds and there is a constant war of ideas, critics occupy an important place in the vanguard of a new literary movement.

One of the criticisms that needed to be made of our left-wing critics, however, has been on the score of their terrible mandarism. They carry their Marxian scholarship as though it were a heavy cross. They perform academic autopsies on living books. They wax pious and often sectarian. Often, they use a scholastic jargon as barbarous as the terminology that for so long infected most Marxian journalism in this country, a foreign language no American could understand without a year or two of post-graduate study. Which of our critics shows his joy in battle and birth? Which of them laughs or breathes hard? They have squeezed most of the humanity out of the art of criticism.

Stalin might have meant such critics, when he said recently: "Where there is joy in the work, somehow the work always goes better." And Newton Arvin, himself on occasion a fine, frosty New England academic, turns on his past in the following surprising words in Partisan-Anvil:

> As I see it, one of the troubles is that too few of the critical writers on the left have quite realized what a rich and interesting form of expression criticism can be, or how truly it can give voice to just as many kinds of thought and feeling as, in a wholly dissimilar vein, poetry and fiction do.
>
> There is no reason under the sun why it has to be drily expository or prosaically analytical, or why it can only be written from the eyebrows up. Yet that is what too much of it is like.
>
> One can agree wholeheartedly with the point that Phillips and Rahv are making in their essay, and still wish that they could make it in a less scholastic manner. One can feel that what Granville Hicks has done, in the essay here reprinted, and in so many other places, is simply invaluable to the American movement; and still wish that when he writes criticism he would let himself give vent to more of the energies in a remarkable temperament than he often does. Imagination, anger, the subtle sense of form, the historical fancy and plenty of other things have as legitimate a role in criticism as the practical will or the discursive intelligence has. . . .

Newton Arvin was assigned the job of reviewing the *Anthology of Proletarian Literature*. He apologized, said he couldn't and wrote a long letter, instead, from which the above extract is taken. It is the best critique I have seen in a long time and it makes me wonder: oughtn't all our left-wing critics from now on let their hair down and write letters instead of reviews? The result in Arvin's case has been magnificent.

It seems a pity, however, that Anvil-Partisan Review has printed in its first issue a theatrical criticism by James Farrell, a critic who not only lets his hair down, but goes, I think, entirely too shockingly nudist or let us say, subjective.

Mr. Farrell, in discussing *Paradise Lost,* the latest play by Clifford Odets, opens with a rather sour attack on Odets' personal character. He hints that Odets is vain and so forth, and that the other critics have fed this vanity by calling Odets "the white hope" of the American stage. It is true that some of the Odets publicity has been a little foolish, but this is the kind of thing that happens to young writers in America on the way to fame. Sometimes all this unrestrained ballyhoo cripples them for life. But Clifford Odets is a man of enormous talent. His plays have the crackle of genius, audible to every ear, and this is what has excited all the critics over him.

Is it his fault? James Farrell, with a rather coarse and cold irony, hints that it is. There is a prejudice on Farrell's part, perhaps, against Odets. Out of such a prejudice, however, is it fair for a critic to say of another man's play, after he has attacked the man's character, that it was "consistently, ferociously bad"? This isn't Marxian criticism, it seems to me; it is closer to the stale old Bohemian days of the literary feuds.

When one remembers that Farrell also attacked Jack Conroy's first novel, *The Disinherited,* saying in The Nation, that the book had "no soul" (this from the author of the most soulless novels in recent America); and that Farrell wrote a sour review of Clara Weatherwax's fine novel in The Herald-Tribune, one begins to wonder what is wrong, and whether Farrell has the objectivity, fairness and generosity—let us also add, common sense—to be a critic.

I wish there were more time here to di cuss this Odets play which has alread aroused so much discussion. I differ wit Farrell, who calls the play "ferociously, co sistently bad," and Stanley Burnshaw, wh in THE NEW MASSES recently, criticized underlying thesis.

The play has its technical and ideologic weaknesses; but far from being "bad," found it one of those strange experiences the theater that makes the gooseflesh cra along your spine. It has that curious, po electricity we call art; if the word " means anything at all. Yes, I am on side of the people who are knocked f loop by the Odets talent. May the cr not ruin him!

Paradise Lost is a parable of the decay of the middle class. But is the middle class completely decadent as all this, asks Stanley Burnshaw? The answer is: certainly not, but were the Russian aristocrats all as bad as they appear in some of the Eisenstien films? No; some of them even became revolutionists and Communists. Odets' play is so obviously symbolistic and not realistic, that I marvel at the rather pedestrian approach some of the critics have taken toward it. Surely the final speech in this play clinches the whole thesis: the bankrupt hero accepts the bankruptcy of capitalism (in symbolic speech), and looks forward to a new life and a better world.

Many of the middle class still don't believe capitalism is finished. They hope for a restoration of the boom days. This is the mood that makes for fascism. Odets tried to make them accept, emotionally, the fact that their old world is dead. If he had done it in poetry, I think some critics would have granted him the right to poetic exaggeration. On the stage; they demand photographic truth; reportage; labor research; the bare, exact truth, no trimmings, no transfiguration by a wild poet's emotions. Well, I think they're wrong; even Ibsen got beyond that kind of play; and it is time we restored Elizabethan breadth and fire to our revolutionary stage.

And now there is no time left for the other contents of the new Partisan Review and Anvil. But here is a list that ought to make anyone want to buy a copy:

John Dos Passos contributes a chapter from his eagerly-awaited new novel, last of his famous trilogy. Carl Van Doren makes an eloquent appeal for more literature from the subsoil of America—yes, surprisingly enough, he calls for proletarian literature.

There is an article on the Brazilian Revo-

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lution; and Newton Arvin's letter, discussed above; and Waldo Frank's speech on the Writer's Part in Communism and an extract from Joseph Freeman's forthcoming book, *An American Testament.*

Three fine short stories by André Malraux, Ben Field and Saul Levitt; poetry by James Neugass, Genevieve Taggard, Kerker Quinn and Clara Weatherwax, the latter interesting to me, because it confirms what her novel revealed about her fresh and strong talent; and a movie criticism by Kenneth Fearing.

We need a literary magazine that will do for our left-wing writers what The Dial and The Little Review once did for the post-war generation of young writers. There is today certainly as much, if not more, blazing, bursting, original literary talent around—and most of it is going Left. We have the youth, and that means the future. Partisan-Anvil has made a fine start at its job of organizing and developing the newest generation in American literature. It deserves our interest and support.

MICHAEL GOLD.

California Battleground

IN DUBIOUS BATTLE, by John Steinbeck. Covici-Friede. $2.50.

THE seasonal nature of the lumber, fishing and fruit-growing industries has created a permanent army of a million migratory workers on the Pacific Coast. The "working stiffs," who travel in boxcars and ancient Fords, wander up and down the coast tracking rumors of three or four week jobs. According to the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,* "no country has so many homeless men as the United States or relies on their services for so large a proportion of its labor." This situation has been intensified by the effects of prolonged depression, technological displacement and mortgage foreclosures. The American "hobo" is not attracted to a nomadic existence by its variety and irresponsibility; he is forced into it by the pressure of poverty and the absence of more desirable alternatives.

To the labor organizer this vast group presents an unusually difficult problem. The men are discontented with their wages and their way of life, but their discontent, though bitter, is expressed in ill-sustained and undisciplined outbursts. They do not have a stake in any one industry or location; they do not get to know each other over a long period of time; they are personally uprooted as well as socially disinherited. Organization among these casual workers is a heroic task which requires infinite courage, patience and tact.

This "dubious battle," the fight to organize a group of California fruit-pickers against the Growers' Association and its vigilante tools, is the theme of Mr. Steinbeck's novel. The scene of the struggle is "Torgas Valley"; the generals of the opposition are MacLeod and Jim Nolan, Communist organizers. It is a battle against heavy odds. The growers have money, guns and the sheriff on their side. The organizers have mainly "courage never to submit or yield." If the immediate outcome of the strike is "dubious," the ultimate victory may be read in the steadily increasing militancy of workers like London, who begin by suspecting the "Reds" and end by joining their party, having experienced the brutal terror of the vigilantes and the futility of individualistic opposition.

It has often been pointed out by Marxist critics that many proletarian novels suffer from their effort to fictionize abstract theories in a mechanical way. The skeleton does not stick through the flesh in this novel. Although the strategy of class struggle and strike organization is the chief topic of conversation in *In Dubious Battle,* the novel at no time becomes a disembodied course in the principles of Communism; the strike is not staged on a blackboard. This is a "straight" story, even a thriller. From the moment when Mac and Jim arrive in the valley to Mac's final speech to the strikers, after Jim has been butchered by the vigilantes, the plot is sustained by a series of cumulative tensions and a prose which is always stripped for action. Mr. Steinbeck talks United States. His sentences are packed with intense physical experience, whether it be the gobbling of a hamburger by a self-starved man or the impression made on a tired worker's mind by trees at twilight.

The novel poses an interesting problem, recognized but not analyzed by the critics. Do the organizers, as John Chamberlain points out in an excellent review of the book, use the workers as "just so much revolutionary clay" without reference to their immediate demands in the strike? Is Mac willing "to let one man be busted over the head if the blow will only serve to make the onlookers into radicals?" If "revolutionary clay" and "radicalism" are synonymous with simple cooperation among the working stiffs who know absolutely nothing of the rudiments of labor organization, then perhaps Mr. Chamberlain is right. But to this reviewer's mind, Steinbeck's organizers see *always* in terms of the immediate situation; more immediate to the welfare of the migratory workers than "winning the strike" is a lesson in cooperation, for the latter is requisite to the success of the former. Significantly, it is the doctor, the skeptic, who speculates about a Soviet America, not the Communist organizers. To the latter, terms such as "cooperation," "strike," "general strike" and "revolution" are not separable.

Mr. Steinbeck has traveled a long way since *Tortilla Flat,* his best seller of last year. His new book has been properly hailed as an important addition to the American proletarian novel. WALTER RALSTON.

Can You Name them? "RULERS OF AMERICA"

by Anna Rochester

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Huey and His Hooey

THE STORY OF HUEY P. LONG, by Carleton Beals. J. B. Lippincott Co. $2.50

HUEY LONG: A CANDID BIOGRAPHY, by Forrest Davis. Dodge Publishing Co. $2.50.

MY FIRST DAYS IN THE WHITE HOUSE, by Huey Pierce Long. The Telegraph Press. $1.

THE bullet that on September 8 tore through the body of Huey Long rubbed out one of the most remarkable, gifted and explosively colorful personalities that has ever blazed a path across the American political scene. But it left unshaken, untouched the conditions that produced Huey P. Long.

Both Forrest Davis and Carleton Beals have done a good job with the biography of Huey Long. The Davis book is better written and better proportioned, but Beals' *The Story of Huey P. Long* is more comprehensive, more incisive and is vastly superior both in its marshalling of evidence and in its understanding of the social implications of this evidence. A shortcoming of both books (though here, too, Beals falls less short) is that in neither is the story of Huey Long sufficiently related—except by inference and indirection—to the story of these last six crisis years that catapulted him from machine politician and governor of a backward state to "national menace" and messiah of millions. And neither book deals sufficiently with the general question of fascism in this country.

Genius, volcanic and unpredictable, Long undoubtedly had. But he made history not out of whole cloth, but out of the conditions that he found at hand. And his dramatic—or was it melodramatic?—end was not an irrational act of fate, but as much an expression of America—crisis-ridden America—as his rise to power. The full truth behind that sudden drop of the curtain will perhaps never be known. But the fact that this was the first assassination of an oustanding American political figure since the murder of McKinley should have given greater pause than it did. And the investigation that followed was too eloquently brief and perfunctory to have been so complacently filed away into the pigeonholes of the past.

Both Davis and Beals agree in characterizing Long as an enemy of democracy and an incipient fascist. Davis, however, is confused in regard to the class character of Huey's activities.

"Huey had led a minor revolution," he writes of Long's election to the governorship. "A shift in class control had taken place. The ex-printer's devil, ex-'drummer,' ex-hobo, ex-St. George of the public utilities crusades was the organ of a poor-white revolution."

And confusion is worse confounded with this:

"Intuitively, Huey was behaving as a successful revolutionist. His tactics would have delighted the Karl Marx who found fault with the Communards of 1870 for failing to take over the Bank of France, the army general staff and the government bureaucrats."

Apart from the distortion of Marx's criticism of the Commune, this muddled conception of the corrupt reactionary Long dictatorship as the rule of the poor farmers and lower middle class, comparable to the dictatorship of the proletariat, blunts the edge of Davis' analysis throughout the book and makes him incapable of a coherent explanation of the tendencies represented by Huey Long.

There is danger in this line of thought. Raymond Gram Swing showed in his *Forerunners of Fascism* what may happen if you start from this false premise. Beginning with hostility to Long as an enemy of democracy, Swing, floundering in the fog of "poor-white revolution," with his eyes fixed on the beacon-light of Long's "achievements," slid into a position that was almost an apologia for the Louisiana dictator.

The fundamental strength of Carleton Beals' book lies precisely in his clear, unequivocal grasp of this central question. In his very first chapter he writes: "Whatever his (Long's) general popularity, inevitably he had to become the instrument of big business in his state; he had to celebrate secret deals and alliances with the corporation heads with whom publicly he shadow-boxed. Despite all his profound sound-and-fury battles with the Standard Oil Company, it is still able to refine oil, in large part *because of very low wage costs,* most cheaply in Louisiana than almost anywhere else in the Union." (Emphasis in the original.—A. B. M.)

And Beals presents the evidence to prove this thesis. The entire development of the book is along the parallel lines of exposing Huey's achievements for Big Business and debunking his alleged achievements for the masses. Some of this material has appeared before, in Sender Garlin's pamphlet, *The Real Huey P. Long,* but Beals has uncovered a great deal of new data.

Two of the most impressive chapters are the ones called *Soak the Rich* and *Flesh and Blood,* the first listing in detail Huey's record of services to the bankers and industrialists, the second his reactionary record in regard to labor organization and social legislation. The mass of evidence in these and two other chapters, *Black Utopia* and *Kingfish Kultur,* completely refutes the assertion of Forrest Davis that Long "shifted the incidence of taxation—real estate taxation actually has decreased for the poor and Louisiana has no general sales tax—and he fulfilled at least some of the aspirations of the submerged classes, white and black."

"Huey P. Long gives the people the headlines and the corporations the profits," one of his political enemies once said of Huey Long. Beals proves it with chapter and verse.

Beals does a great service, too, in refuting the widespread fiction—repeated by Davis—that Long showed no open prejudice against Negroes. The "Black Utopia" that Beals describes—and his criticism is buttressed by factual data, drawn in great part from official sources—lends impressive weight to his statement:

"Never since the days of chattel slavery have the conditions of the Negro sharecroppers been worse than they are today in the state of Louisiana."

It was not death alone, but life—the actual political record of Huey Long—that has

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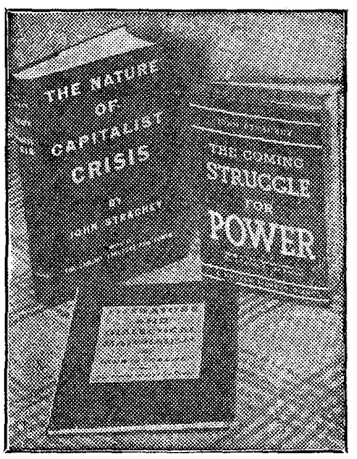

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given a sardonic twist to the Kingfish's posthumously published *My First Days in the White House*. This tongue-in-the-cheek book reveals Huey in the modest role of ushering in for the country that Utopia which he failed so conspicuously to establish in Louisiana. Huey's cabinet, including such people as Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Al Smith, and Senators Borah and Couzens, is aptly described by Carleton Beals as "a canny attempt to build up a united political front against the Roosevelt regime, without regard for any of the principles Long espoused." And his selection of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., for the position of chairman of the committee to redistribute wealth, as against his treatment of Morgan, who is pictured as trying to kick over the traces, is a further bid for support (cash) from a source that Huey, for all the thunder and lightning of his "war" on Standard Oil, had evidently tapped before.

Despite its amusing charlatanry, *My First Days in the White House* is a rather dull book. The exhilaration of Huey Long was in his speech and action, not his writing.

In his magnificent report at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International Dimitroff pointed out that the fascists exploit the best sentiments of the people for reactionary ends. He also noted as a peculiarity of developing American fascism that "it appears principally in the guise of an opposition to fascism, which it accuses of being an 'un-American' tendency imported from abroad," and that it "tries to portray itself as the custodian of the Constitution and 'American democracy.'"

The truth of this is apparent in the activities of William Randolph Hearst, the American Liberty League and of such trail-blazers of fascism as Huey Long and Father Coughlin. Long played on the desire of millions of Americans for economic security, for social equality and real political freedom and he did it in a typically American way. He converted his whole personality, so vastly different from that of Hitler or Mussolini, into part of this "democratic" demagogy and he used not the pseudo-Socialist slogans that the Nazis found necessary in a country where Marxist traditions were strong, but pseudo-democratic catch-phrases — "share-the-wealth," for example—rooted in the soil of our democratic traditions. And what is "every man a king" —which Long lifted from William Jennings Bryan—but the development to the point of caricature of "all men are created free and equal?"

Long died before he had built up a national machine or had succeeded in consolidating substantial big capitalist support behind him. He left various pretenders, but no political heirs. The death of Huey Long did not, however, diminish the danger of fascism in this country. On the contrary, his assassination may very well have been a milestone in the advance of those ultra-reactionary sections of Wall Street finance-capital that regarded his share-the-wealth demagogy as dangerous because it tended to release forces which they might not be able to control.

As Carleton Beals points out, not Long's diagnosis, but his cure was wrong; only under Socialism will it be possible to share the wealth of society. But the danger which Long represented and which his opponents on the extreme Right represent equally, if not more so—the danger of fascism—requires the vigilance and immediate united action of all those who want to preserve even that limited democracy and freedom which we still enjoy. That means: a political party of anti-fascism, a broad, militant Farmer-Labor Party to unite workers, farmers and middle-class people against the common enemy.

This is the most urgent conclusion to be drawn from the life and death of Huey Long.

A. B. MAGIL.

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RAND SCHOOL PRESS
7 East 15th Street, N. Y. C. — $2.50

The Students Teach Themselves

REVOLT ON THE CAMPUS, by James Wechsler. Covici-Friede. $3.

INNUMERABLE articles and speeches have been devoted to the "great awakening" of the American student body. Too few have stopped to *explain and trace the origin* of the new trends and developments among students.

James Wechsler has written a history of the new student movement which has developed in the last four or five years. His aim has been to interpret present-day student activity and ideology in terms of the fundamental changes which have taken place in society as a whole. The origin of the new trends among students can be traced only by examining those social changes which impinge upon the academic scene. Such an approach is of particular interest because the turmoil and conflicts of a society in transition force themselves upon an institution whose time hallowed function is to assist in preserving the existing social order and ameliorating the conflicts and turmoil in society. It is altogether fitting that the defenders of a social order which faces dissolution should offer death as a solution.

In his address to the June, 1935, graduating class of Drake University, Herbert Hoover said:

"I hear much lament over the outlook for graduating students. Did it ever occur to you that all the people who now live in these houses, who conduct this vast, complex life and civilization are going to die? And that just as sure as death you will take over their jobs?"

Wechsler is able to analyze the reasons for the spread of recent student activity and organization, not only because he understands the problems facing the "depression graduate" but because he tackles the basic question of the relations between school and society. ". . . education has ever been a product of the existing social order," says Dean Klapper, of the C.C.N.Y. School of Education, "charged with the function of rationalizing and perpetuating the society that supports it." It is therefore quite fitting and proper for a society which can live only by a systematic and ever recurring process of large scale destruction of lives and property, to utilize the educational system as an agency for the production of bodies suited for war and minds fitted to provide the moral and intellectual justification of imperialist war. The myth that the school is an institution existing separate and apart from society, independent of class lines in society and training the youth in impartial and ultimate verities was destroyed not by the recent wave of repression against the militant student movement, but by the growing realization of the permanent role of the school in a capitalist society.

"Learning went to war" in 1917, and in every period of American history learning served to "rationalize and perpetuate" capitalist society. The House of Morgan may be purely a financial and industrial undertaking, but the schools were converted into barracks to serve a war which America entered because, as Ambassador Page cabled President Wilson, "the pressure of this approaching crisis . . . has gone beyond the ability of the Morgan financial agency for the British and French governments." In the chapter entitled "The Hierarchy" Wechsler shows the specifically American method for insuring the control of pedagogic destinies by industrial and financial magnates. Trustee Domination of higher education in the United States has firmly established the principle which permits those who pay the piper to call the tune.

In briefly noting the precursors of the present campus revolt, Wechsler implies an interesting comparison between the radical and peace movement of the years following the World War and that of the present day. He shows for example that the militant student periodical The New Student, which began publication in 1922, based its program on a vague conception of the need for change and the illusion that the students could lead society, without any recognition of conflicts. Significant in the movement which gains momentum in 1932, is the recognition

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by the active leaders of the student movement of the background and forces which gave rise to the very movement in which they are participating and the direction which it must take.

Most of the book is devoted to the struggle and activities in which students participated since the memorable trip to investigate the conditions of the Kentucky coal miners in the spring of 1932. The school generation which found that the overabundance of material goods resulted in an increase of want and degradation, also discovered that the absolute social need for the services of professionals, skilled workmen, white collar employes and school graduates generally, increased almost as rapidly as the real demand for their services decreased. The decline of our entire economic structure brought to the fore its campus reflex, the crisis in education, and proved the inability of capitalism to provide a means of livelihood for the young generation.

It was this school generation which formed the National Student League, which transformed the college section of the League for Industrial Democracy into the Student League for Industrial Democracy now merged with the N.S.L. to form the American Student Union. The events which are described in Revolt on the Campus, make exciting reading. There are the strikes and demonstrations for academic freedom, for peace and on other issues which face them in the school. It deals with the spreading movement which brings to the attention of the student larger social problems. A world which is on a war footing strives to prepare the young people for that war. And the strike of 175,000 students on April 12, 1935, the peace mobilization on November 8, attest the students' recognition of the need for combatting the war machine and joining with the larger movement of workers in the struggle for peace.

Unfortunately, Wechsler devotes almost all of his attention to the narrative of the struggles and does not sufficiently explain the organized basis for the movement which had developed. In describing the origin of the National Student League, he erroneously states that dissatisfied members of the League for Industrial Democracy participated with Communists and liberals in an exodus from the L.I.D. and the formation of the National Student League. The truth of the matter is that Socialist, Communist and liberal students formed the National Student League to fulfill a function which was not being performed by any other existing student group and they did not have to leave any organization to do this. They saw the need for a student organization, unaffiliated to any political party, conducting its activities primarily on student issues and thus educating students concerning the tie-up between those student issues and their social origins.

Wechsler was about to conclude his book, when the Student L.I.D. and the N.S.L. decided to merge and build an all inclusive student organization. The entire book is an argument for such unity. The history of continued and often cruel repression of the student movement, the formation of vigilante and fascist groups in the schools, are a most potent argument for the type of unity which is already being realized, as the only method for preventing the spread of fascism among the youth.

Revolt on the Campus is written in a clear and fast moving style. At times one wishes that it were not so "fast moving" as to give the impression that the student movement is a continual succession of demonstrations and repression by the authorities. There is very little analysis of various types of student organizations and their history. Other faults are the failure to evaluate the entire process of educational retrenchment, to deal conclusively with the role of the Negro student, particularly in the segregated system of education in the South.

Wechsler speaks of the principles which led to the formation of the National Student League but does not show that there soon developed a parallel process in the Student L.I.D. which ultimately brought home the lesson that none of the groups concerned benefited from the division.

However, these shortcomings are insignificant when placed in the background of this first and thorough analysis of the recent movement among American students.

JOSEPH COHEN.

Brief Review

VICTOR LAWSON: HIS TIME AND HIS WORK, by Charles H. Dennis. University of Chicago Press. $4.

VICTOR LAWSON, publisher of The Chicago Daily News for nearly fifty years, was known as a liberal. He was liberal only by comparison with the paper's present chief — reactionary, Republican Col. Frank Knox — to whom, incidentally, this biography is dedicated.

Lawson was shrewd, amiable, modest and refrained from some of the grosser practices of his business. But in the last analysis he remained a business man, *a capitalist* and, as The Wall Street Journal put it in 1926, a "genius for business detail." The paper grew with Chicago, establishing a large "family-circle" circulation, for a time the largest in the country.

Mr. Lawson established a world-wide news service which appealed to many of Chicago's foreign-born readers, another shrewd stroke. Reform movements were supported locally, the Postal Savings system and Chicago sanitary district championed. Yet he consistently supported the two conservative parties in the presidential elections. In short, Lawson was basically a capitalist and his paper a conventional one.

To what kind of liberalism can Mr. Lawson lay claim? He was a man who "surrendered with reluctance the principle of the open shop" in his mechanical departments which, incidentally, he rarely, if ever, visited. He broke with President Wilson because (in his view) the latter surrendered too easily to a strike threat on the railroads to secure passage of the Adamson Eight Hour Law; then Lawson wrote gleefully that the "railroad people [i.e. employers] of Chicago" were picking up his editorials. He constantly urged the "necessity of universal service" in the World War, a war in which he personally did not have to fight. He wrote: "The private corporation is a most beneficial economic agency for the distribution of proprietorship among the many." And finally, his conception of "The Fight for Democracy of the Press," as Mr. Dennis, who worked with him for forty years, calls it, consisted of establishing the anti-labor, near-monopolistic Associated Press. His personal geniality cannot loom larger than his social role.

HY KRAVIF.

MEN AND BRETHREN, by James Gould Cozzens. Harcourt, Brace & Co. $2.50

ALTHOUGH James Gould Cozzens is in his early thirties, he has a flock of highly praised novels to his credit. Time magazine thinks he has "hung a U. S. literary record" what with having been so precocious in his early undergraduate years and having two of his books selected by the Book-of-the-Month Club, etc. His *The Last Adam* was characterized by Lewis Gannett as "a triumphant creation" and praised by F.P.A. and Henry Seidel Canby. Of *S. S. San Pedro* Christopher Morley said "Mr. Cozzens's magnificent story . . . ranks with the best of Conrad's work" and that in some ways Cozzens was really better. With such opinions by such people in mind, it is always best to be wary.

Men and Brethren portrays a "modern," young, successful clergyman in charge of an indifferent parish in New York. In the course of a week-end, he runs up against the problems of various people's lives which he attempts to solve.

The exigencies of sex preserve the prevailing tone, but even the revolution comes in for casual consideration. Example on page 104: "She's a good girl, Pad—Your Reverence. Now only a healthy pinko. I've snatched her like a brand from the Young Communist League burning. She's got a good head. She's perfectly able to see that atheism isn't an integral part of Communism. It's just a temporary local Russian reaction to a church grown corrupt—"

And on page 140 there is this priceless philosophical counterpoint:

"He's the natural product of a society in which property is the source of privilege—until we change that, we won't get anywhere.

"Until we get somewhere, how will we change that? asked Ernest (the Hero), exasperated."

NORMAN MACLEOD.

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The Theater

Questions Which Need an Answer

IN OUR report of the banning of *Ethiopia* we ventured the belief that the real forces which forced Regional Director Rice to resign and the W.P.A. Theater Project to submit to State Department censorship would remain unexplained. Since our article a mass meeting has brought forward some questions which, if answered, would illuminate the portentous obscurity in which the administration has abandoned the whole affair.

The second edition of *The Living Newspaper* was approved by Rice for immediate production. It involved the Scottsboro and Herndon cases, lynching, anti-Negro discrimination, the plight of the sharecroppers, the filibuster defeat of the Wagner-Costigan anti-lynching bill, etc. Has this production been called off? If so, why?

In addition to demanding something more palpable than silence from Federal Administrator Hopkins, who had promised that there would be no censorship, Elmer Rice asks: (1) if a W.P.A. play prepared for Chicago was not banned because of Mayor Kelly's objection to its "radical utterances and reflections upon the administration"; (2) if a government official named Roche has not been blue-penciling scripts of the New England theater project.

Addressing himself to President Roosevelt's secretary, Stephen Early, Rice inquires:

> Did you not say, in private, that you would be glad if the whole Federal Theater Project collapsed because you foresaw that it would be a continual source of embarrassment to the Administration?

There have been replies to none of these questions. On the contrary, there has been talk of turning *The Living Newspaper* from general to scientific news-matter; of transferring newspaper men from the theater project ("where they don't belong") to the writing division (where they would cause less trouble.) It was even suggested that *The Living Newspaper* eschew the present and deal with the past—but the ingenious father of this suggestion must have realized its absurdity.

While we cannot doubt that the administration is now working out a device for "controlling" the W.P.A. productions, it would be naive to imagine that it is interested only in emasculating the scripts. To be sure, it is immediately concerned with keeping vigil over the productions to see that nothing slips through. But it is easy to see how the issue of censorship might be utilized as an excuse for cutting off the whole theater project.

It is hardly necessary to argue to NEW MASSES readers the importance of combatting any such attempt. Over 4,000 theater workers in New York alone have secured jobs in their own field. This was not a generous idea of the administration; for the jobs were won as the result of a relentless demand. And their continuation can be assured only by maintaining this fundamental demand while fighting off the attempts at a cultural gag.

Theater Dances

IT IS rare that an audience is allowed to watch a work in its creative growth from a fragment to completion. Doris Humphrey presented *New Dance* in the autumn; despite its tantalizing obscurities, we could not avoid reporting it as a representation of growing class consciousness. On January 19 *New Dance* was offered as the second half of a single composition and much of the obscurity disappeared as the effects of *New Dance* were defined by their causes in the introductory *Theater Piece*. The weird insanities of an each-man-for-himself social system are traced with an ironic feeling for the tragic underlying logic. The mass is too enmeshed in immediacy to see the whole picture; only a single symbolic figure fronts the sordid forces. Frustrated at first, her protest steadily grows through the actions of the various groups until the chaos-pattern of individual struggle transforms them into a harmony-pattern of common action.

If this is a magnificent example of the possibility of suffusing a work of art with social content, then Tina Flade, Harald Kreutzberg and Trudi Schoop have a dismal significance. Flade's choice of nine romantic numbers states the narrowness of her interests. She has strength at times but too often her vigor comes from percussive accent rather than any true forceful movement. Her fine technical endowment will remain pitifully wasted if she persists in the direction of her *Figure Might Be Seen in the Moon.*

It is impossible to agree with Thomas Mann when he talks of Trudi Schoop in the same breath with Charlie Chaplin. Her various *Want-Ad* episodes are a weary experience; her *Fridolin's* petty bourgeois foibles at best produce a few feeble smiles. Hers is the non-fatal case of a truly gifted performer who has no ability whatever at creative choreography.

It is harder to explain the present demise of Kreutzberg, who turned New York on its head a dozen years ago . . . unless it is that the times have moved and Kreutzberg has not. The senseless but industrious applause which featured his February 2 recital made not a few spectators suspect the presence of a claque, for the program was substantially the same series of adept trifles that he palmed off last year. Kreutzberg, of course, has exceptional virtuosity, but for more than one observer the grace was imbued with an androgynous quality. It is significant, too, that the best parts of his program were the dances for children—a rather bitter end for the German marvel whose double-leap made New York audiences swoon in 1924.

Novel into Play

ETHAN FROME is now presented as a play (National Theater) but even so skilled a theater-man as Owen Davis has been strait-jacketed by his material. Edith Wharton's memorable story of a poor New England farmer, his fretting wife and the penni-

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less mill-girl has been sliced into a dozen scenes, absorbing in themselves but more like tableaux than interdependent stages of growth. As in Joseph North's *Angelo Herndon,* recently made into a mass recitation, the intrinsic quality of *Ethan Frome* is indisseverable from narration. Pauline Lord and Ruth Gordon give extraordinary performances against the background of Mielziner's sets which are valid and warm, if occasionally like picture postcards.

In *Victoria Regina* (Broadhurst Theater) Helen Hayes does wonders with a script that oozes sweetness and sentiment for three solid acts. What a warm, piquant and heroic sovereign the British Queen appears according to Laurence Housman's picture—and what an insidiously false picture it is. We cannot remember a more arrogant attempt to cover up history than this cajoling picture of sweet intimacy, dainty idiosyncrasies and the human—all too human—sufferings of the royalty.

STANLEY BURNSHAW.

Art

William Gropper

NO one genuinely interested in the state of contemporary art in America—certainly, no one in any degree concerned with the constantly growing body of revolutionary art—can afford to miss the current exhibition of painting by Gropper (A.C.A. Gallery). It is from any standpoint one of the most exciting shows of the season. As a devastating political cartoonist and as a sensitive graphic artist Gropper stands just about at the top of the profession and occupies a position, we may definitely assert, already historic. From this standpoint alone it is worth seeing how he acquits himself in another medium. We discover at once that he is entirely at home in it. Graphic artists who turn to painting generally lean heavily on the technique in which they have reached a certain perfection, stress line at the expense of color and consequently produce colored drawings or in any case treat color as an addition, as an afterthought. This is emphatically not the case with Gropper. He thinks in terms of color which he applies differently to different subjects depending on the effectiveness he seeks to achieve. What is even more rare with graphic artists turned painters, he experiments constantly to discover how certain colors or surfaces will produce certain results for the realization of a given aim. Thus he uses canvas, composition board, cement, paper for variety of surface texture; he applies transparent and opaque oil paint and tempera, sometimes ingeniously combining the two by superposition. The result is freshness, richness, sparkle. At the same time he deviates freely from academic chiaroscuro in order to throw into relief some objects, to cloak others into a tenebrous veil, but mainly to create dramatic movement as in "Audience," "K.K.K.," "Suicide." Gropper is not even overly ceremonious with anatomy and perspective.

But it would be totally wrong to conclude from this that he experiments for the sake of experiment. Gropper's experiments are always intended to make emphatic and convincing what he has to say. That he has a good deal to say we know—he says it without equivocation. Gropper's revolutionary, working-class orientation leaves no room for doubt. He is, as any revolutionary artist must inevitably be, not a mere detached observer of the passing scene; he is an active participant in the shaping of events. But again, unlike the general tendency among political cartoonists, his range of themes is extraordinarily wide, extending from political satire and study of manners to still life and landscape.

Let us take a look first at the more frankly political pictures. "K.K.K.," a pale sinister klansman on a pale horse sweeping forth on his gruesome political (yes, political) mission, swinging his rope ready for the lynching bee; "Burning Wheat," workers in the field of swaying grain, a streak of flame and a cloud of black smoke advancing threateningly upon them. It is worth noting how effectively the meaning of each theme is realized by the specific language of art: the warm golden-brownish ochre of the wheat and the overhanging smoke, the rhythm of the workers' bodies in "Burning Wheat"; the ghost-like klansman rushing downward as into an abyss on a deep, dark grey-green tumultuous background in "K.K.K." Two searing contemporary social documents, two vital works of art, disturbing one's intellectual equanimity, gripping one's emotions. Here is a very timely topic "The Senate." A typical rotund political windbag is pouring forth, his hands up in a fine frenzy of oratorical bathos. He is probably talking for the record because most of the seats are vacant and the couple of other politicians present do not pay the slightest attention; one is diligently absorbed in a tabloid, the other has put his feet on a desk and is stretched out comfortably for a snooze. Gropper generally uses no models but this particular scene was lifted by him during a special trip he had made to Washington to observe the "people's representatives" in action and in the flesh. Good idea for a mural—and always timely.

Now let us turn to milder satire on side products of contemporary capitalist civilization. "Art Jury," blindfolded jurors passing judgment on the value of objects whose very essence is visual. "Psychiatrist," a sexless individual up a tree (tree of knowledge?) with dream phallic-symbols floating underneath, expert on all ills sex is heir to. Let us note the keen characterization in "Gentleman," "Judge," "Cafe Royal" (here the graphic artist is beginning to trespass on the territory of the painter). Each one alive and none photographic. For if Gropper is not a pure formalist, neither is he a drab, literal empiricist.

We might examine briefly one more series—the out of doors in "Fruit Pickers," "Landscape," "C.C.C.", "Farm for Sale." The same variety *within* this genre as *between* it and other genres. The cool tones in "Landscape," the warm tones in "Fruit Pickers," the combination of cool and warm in the others, point to an imagination inventive and rich. There is also a still life of flowers and a herring, which Gropper did with his tongue in his cheek. But it is not necessary to dwell on every picture in the exhibition (although it might be worth it). Nor is it necessary to maintain that the work exhibited, despite the general excellence, is the very ultimate. Gropper can still surpass himself. His present work reveals a verve, an aliveness, a competence in the use of the artist's tools. Gropper seldom uses models; he works spontaneously and almost as naturally as he breathes. No doubt he has looked with profit on the work of other artists—Breughel, Daumier, perhaps even Ryder, but what he has observed and absorbed becomes an organic and original part of his own mind. He has learned infinitely from the daily realities of the class society around us. For we must never forget that if Gropper's work is richly endowed in many ingredients, not the least of them is revolutionary conviction.

LOUIS LOZOWICK.

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Chaplin in "Modern Times"

ROBERT FORSYTHE

IF you have had fears, prepare to shed them; Charlie Chaplin is on the side of the angels. After years of rumors, charges and counter-charges, reports of censorship and hints of disaster, his new film, *Modern Times*, had its world premiere (gala) last week at the Rivoli Theatre, with the riot squad outside quelling the curious mob and with the usual fabulous first-night Broadway audience gazing with some doubt at a figure which didn't seem to be quite the old Charlie. For the first time an American film was daring to challenge the superiority of an industrial civilization based upon the creed of men who sit at flat-topped desks and press buttons demanding more speed from tortured employes. There were cops beating demonstrators and shooting down the unemployed (specifically the father of the waif who is later picked up by Chaplin), there is a belt line which operates at such a pace that men go insane, there is a heart-breaking scene of the helpless couple trying to squeeze out happiness in a little home of their own (a shack in a Hooverville colony). It is the story of a pathetic little man trying bravely to hold up his end in this mad world.

Chaplin's methods are too kindly for great satire but by the very implication of the facts with which he deals, he has created a biting commentary upon our civilization. He has made high humor out of material which is fundamentally tragic. If it were used for bad purposes, if it were made to cover up the hideousness of life and to excuse it, it would be the usual Hollywood product. But the hilarity is never an opiate. When the little man picks up a red flag which has dropped from the rear of a truck and finds himself at the head of a workers' demonstration, it is an uproarious moment, but it is followed by the truth—the cops doing their daily dozen on the heads of the marchers. In the entire film, there is only one moment where he seems to slip. After he meets the girl and gets out of jail for the third time, he hears that the factory is starting up again. What he wants most in the world is a home, where he and his girl can settle down and be happy. It is the same factory where he has previously gone berserk on the assembly line. From the radical point of view, the classic ending would have been Chaplin once again on the belt line, eager to do his best and finding anew that what a man had to look forward to in that hell-hole was servitude and final collapse. Instead of this there is a very funny scene where Charlie and Chester Conklin get mixed up in the machinery in attempting to get it ready for production. Just when they have it ready, a man comes along and orders them out on strike. At this point I was worried. "Uh-huh," I said to myself. "Here it comes. The usual stuff about the irresponsible workers, the bums who won't work when they have a chance." But what follows is a scene of the strikers being beaten up by the police and Charlie back again at his life of struggle. Except for that one sequence the film is strictly honest and right. It is never for a moment twisted about to make a point which will negate everything that has gone before.

If I make it seem ponderous and social rather than hilarious, it is because I came away stunned at the thought that such a film had been made and was being distributed. It's what we have dreamt about and never really expected to see. What luck that the only man in the world able to do it should be doing it! Chaplin has done the entire thing himself, from the financing to the final artistic product. He wrote it, acted in it, directed it, cut it, wrote the music for it and is seeing that it is sold to the distributors who have been frantic to get it. It is not a social document, it is not a revolutionary tract, it is one of the funniest of all Chaplin films, but it is certainly no comfort to the enemy. If they like it, it will be because they are content to overlook the significance of it for the sake of the humor.

And humorous it is. Chaplin has never had a more belly-shaking scene than the one where he is being fed by the automatic machine, with the corn-on-the-cob attachment going daft. The Hooverville hut is a miracle of ruin. When he opens the door, he is brained by a loose beam; when he leans against another door, he finds himself half-drowned in the creek; when he takes up a broom, the roof, which it has been supporting, falls in. He comes dashing out of the dog house for his morning dip and alights in two inches of water in a ditch.

Religion comes off a trifle scorched in the scene where the minister's wife, suffering from gas on the stomach, comes to visit the prisoners in jail. There are hundreds of little characteristic bits which build up the picture of Mr. Common Man faced by life. To the gratification of the world, Chaplin brings back his old roller-skating act, teeter-

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ing crabily on the edge of the rotunda in the department store where he is spending the night (one night only) as a watchman. He gives the waif (splendidly played by Paulette Goddard) her first good meal in months and a night's rest in a bed in the furniture department. His desire to get away from the cruel world is so strong that he deliberately gets himself arrested, stoking up with two full meals in a cafeteria and then rapping on the window for the attention of a policeman when he nears the cashier's desk.

From the standpoint of humor, however, the picture is not a steady roar. The reason for it is simple: You can't be jocular about such things as starvation and unemployment. Even the people who are least affected by the misery of others are not comfortable when they see it. They are not moved by it; they resent it. "What do you want to bring up a lot of things like that for?" That Chaplin has been able to present a comic statement of serious matters without perverting the problem into a joke is all the more to his credit. It is a triumph not only of his art but of his heart. What his political views are, I don't know and don't care. He has the feelings of an honest man and that is enough. There are plenty of people in Hollywood with honest feelings but with the distributive machinery in the hands of the most reactionary forces in the country, there is no possibility of honesty in films dealing with current ideas. It is this fact which makes *Modern Times* such an epoch-making event from our point of view. As I say, only Chaplin could have done it. Except for the one scene I have mentioned, he has never sacrificed the strict line of the story for a laugh. That is so rare as to be practically unknown in films. *Modern Times* itself is rare. To anyone who has studied the set-up, financial and ideological, of Hollywood, *Modern Times* is not so much a fine motion picture as an historical event.

Between Ourselves

STUART DAVIS, secretary of the American Artists' Congress, will open the Friday evening meeting at Town Hall with an outline of the events leading up to the Congress. The complete program of this open session includes the following: Paul Manship, on the threat of fascism to the established artists; Rockwell Kent, "What Is Worth Fighting For?"; Joe Jones, "Suppression of American Art"; Heywood Broun, "Suppression in Letters"; Margaret Bourke-White, "The Position of the Artist in the Soviet Union"; Aaron Douglas, "The Negro in American Culture"; George Biddle, "Nazi Olympics Art Show." Peter Blume will speak on "The Artist Must Choose." (Admission, 35 cents to $1.10.)

The closed sessions will be held at the New School for Social Research. On Saturday morning Jerome Klein, Meyer Schapiro and Lynd Ward will discuss problems and methods of group action. The afternoon session will be devoted to "Problems of the American Artist"; the Sunday morning session to "Economic Problems of the American Artist." Plans for a permanent organization will be discussed at the final session on Sunday afternoon.

Readers desiring to enter our current Cartoon Title Contest should watch the column of contest news which appears every week in our full-page advertisement in THE NEW MASSES. By following the directions given they will be able to avoid making mistakes in sending their entries.

Another meeting of physicians has been called by THE NEW MASSES for Thursday, February 13, at 8:30 P. M. in Room 608 at Steinway Hall (111 West 57th Street, New York City). The program and organization committee, named at the last meeting, will make its report.

T. Maxwell and Sophie Anzel have back copies of THE NEW MASSES which are available to organizations or individuals interested.

The Theater Union Sunday Night program (February 16 at the Civic Repertory Theater) includes a new play by John Wexley: *Running Dogs,* on the subject of the Red Army in China. Among the other numbers on an interesting program for the benefit of the Theater Union's $15,000 drive are *A Letter to the President* and a number of *Satires in Song,* by Paul Peters and George Sklar with music by Jerome Moross.

Seymour Waldman's article in this issue is the first of three analyses on the war danger now facing the American people. The second article will appear in an early issue.

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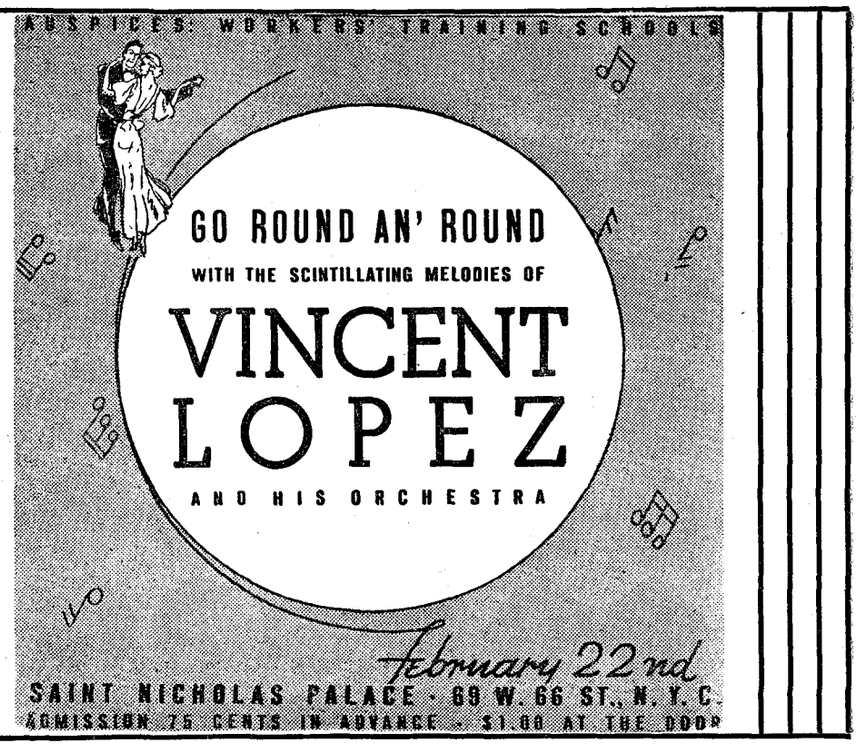
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